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INSIDE



Readathon

Months of planning and preparation have resulted in one of the CNMI's most inspiring school reading programs, stimulating over 300 Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School students to read over 2,000 books in two weeks.

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Safety Training

The Northern Marianas Alliance for Safety and Health provided specialized training to over 100 participants from the private and public sectors in OSHA's Confined Spaces for General Industry last Friday at the Dai Ichi Hotel on Saipan.

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Kirsten's MJ

Kirsten Dunst is languid. In the heat of the spring afternoon, the 22-year-old actress has melted into the couch in the lobby of the Chateau Marmont hotel. She sometimes comes here with her girlfriends and hangs out by the pool. "It feels like a little vacation," says Dunst.

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Report: Bank settles case for \$194M



By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Shinsei Bank Ltd., Japan's first foreign-owned lender, has agreed to pay ¥21.8 billion (about \$194 million) to settle a lawsuit involving a resort developer that owned the Hyatt Regency Saipan, according to international news reports.

Bloomberg, quoting lawyer Ed Calvo, reported yesterday that his client, EIE International Corp, agreed to the settlement over the weekend.

EIE International had been seeking compensation at the CNMI Superior Court for losses on its properties.

The administrator of EIE International was quoted in a Reuters report as saying in January that it was preparing to sue the defunct Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, Shinsei's predecessor, claiming LTCB had sold its overseas properties at unfairly low prices.

EIE, the bankruptcy trustee and the liquidator of a resort developer that failed in the 1990s, was one of the biggest customers of LTCB, which collapsed in 1998.

Reports said that Shinsei faced claims in excess of \$4.3 billion as cited in March by William M. Fitzgerald, one of the lawyers who brought the case.

This lawsuit came when in the 1980s Japanese investors reportedly spent billions of dollars buying overseas assets "only to sell them at knock-down prices after the bubble economy burst."

The EIE administrator had said the See REPORT on Page 8



CASSIE FEJERAN

LAND, HO! Students of Saipan Southern High School spend time on the Senior Rita, a ship structure constructed by students for their Cultural Day celebration last Saturday at the school grounds in Kobilerville.

Mock terror attack staged tomorrow

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Operation Safe Harbor, a full-scale exercise involving a mock chemical Weapon of Mass Destruction and an explosive attack, unfolds tomorrow at 8am at the Charlie Dock.

The exercise, expected to conclude at 4pm, is hosted by the Emergency Management Office in coordination with the EG&G Technical Services.

A statement released by EMO yesterday said the exercise intends to evaluate first responders and response agencies protocols in responding to a weapon of mass destruction terror incident.

"The operation will provide an opportunity for team training of local agencies. [It will] assess coordination and response functions under the Incident Command and Unified Command systems. [It will] assess mutual aid agreements," according to the statement.

EMO director Rudy Pua advised the public not to be alarmed during the conduct of the exercise.

"There will be an explosion, but the public should not be alarmed as it is part of the exercise," he said. "We would have police officers monitoring traffic, and [they] will stop traffic during the time of the explosion."

The statement indicated that during the exercise, responders will perform

See MOCK on Page 8

New trial ordered in Red Rum murder

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman has ordered a retrial for the man convicted in the 1998 murder of a 13-year old male student on Saipan.

Wiseman, in a May 20, 2004 decision, granted the defendant, Jesse James Camacho, a writ of habeas corpus, and

ordered that his conviction be vacated and that he receive a new trial.

Camacho is serving a 45-year imprisonment term after being convicted of first degree murder of his friend, Antonio Sablan Jr., in 1998.

Camacho was a minor when he was convicted of the crime in 1999.

Meantime, Wiseman's order came following a petition by Camacho for habeas

corpus, alleging that his constitutional right to effective assistance was violated.

Based on the facts presented in court during a hearing on April 13, Wiseman said he agrees that there was "an ineffective assistance of counsel" to the defendant.

Camacho was charged with two escapes, one of which he admitted to.

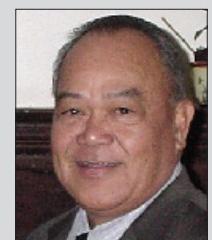
He pleaded not guilty to the second

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'Sign delegate petition'

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The Office of the Washington Representatives is urging all residents to participate in the ongoing petition drive in support of a nonvoting delegate for the CNMI in Congress.



Tenorio

This comes as the U.S. House of Representatives readies to tackle the matter. The U.S. House Resources Committee will meet next month to discuss the nonvoting delegate bid of Resident Representative to Washington D.C. Pete A. Tenorio.

"I want to show the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate that the people of the CNMI want to participate in the national

See SIGN on Page 8

Local

Babauta's right to speedy trial waived

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The federal District Court granted yesterday a petition to waive the speedy trial for former Commonwealth Utilities Corp. water laboratory manager Pete Q. Babauta over alleged water data tampering, allowing him more time to prepare for the case.

Babauta, who is represented by lawyer Anthony Long, is facing criminal charges of con-

sspiracy to defraud the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and false documents.

In a six-page indictment, the U.S. Attorney's Office claimed that Babauta, who is the husband of incumbent CUC executive director Lorraine A. Babauta, conspired with other persons to conceal the true microbiological content of CUC's public water system on different occasions over a four-year period.

This came as the Division of

Environmental Quality repeatedly slapped the CUC last year with citations of various violations of drinking water regulations, including the alleged tampering of water sampling results.

The DEQ eventually decertified CUC's laboratory, prompting the utility firm to hire a private consultant to conduct the analysis of water samples on a regular basis.

Babauta, meantime, retired from CUC late last year or about a month

of forced administrative leave.

Right now, CUC is now evaluating whether to resume its supervision of the water laboratory or to continue to contract it out to a private company.

This came as DEQ said recently that it was ready re-

certify CUC's water laboratory. DEQ said that CUC has made significant progress in complying with the prescribed regulations.

The CUC board earlier said that Babauta's indictment is a delicate issue considering its

impact on the corporation as a whole as well as its effect on his wife's position at CUC.

CUC board chairman Herman P. Sablan earlier said that the board would discuss the matter in its goal to protect the integrity of the corporation.

Report: TSA hiring more but not in NMI

The Transportation Security Administration will be hiring more security screeners in other airports but intends to keep the numbers for the ones at the Saipan International Airport, according to a report on the Pacific Business News website.

It said the agency is beefing up its security screeners at Honolulu, Kona, Lihue and Pago Pago, after finalizing a list of staffing changes at airports nationwide.

In its original announcement, TSA said there will be a "modest adjustments to a workforce that has already functioned for

the last six months at the congressionally mandated cap of 45,000 full-time equivalents."

The adjustment has created 53 new screening jobs in Hawaii, where no airport is losing positions, Pacific Business News said.

"Items of consideration include forecasted air travel, hours of operation, baggage screening areas, checkpoint lanes, types of equipment and screener standard operating procedures," TSA told Pacific Business News.

Honolulu International will gain 35 screeners, going from 613 to 648. Kona International

will gain 15 screeners, going from 93 to 108. Kauai's Lihue International will gain 3 screeners, going from 78 to 81.

Maui's Kahului International will hold at 145 screeners, and Hilo International will hold at 51 screeners. Molokai Airport will keep its eight screeners. Lanai Airport will keep its one screener.

Saipan will hold at 50 positions. Guam will go down 19 positions, from 144 to 125. Pago Pago International in American Samoa will go up two positions from five to seven screeners, the article said.

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Plans to establish a regional pediatric center in the Commonwealth that would serve the entire Micronesia could become a reality when Gov. Juan N. Babauta takes up the issue with the U.S. House of Representatives later this month.

Babauta, who would be leaving for Washington D.C. on May 30, hopes to complete four major tasks during his visit including discussion on plans to make the CNMI a pediatric center.

Also, the governor said his meeting with Rep. Dan Burton, chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Government Reforms-Subcommittee on wellness and human rights, would also discuss issues on diabetes control and other health related concerns of the Commonwealth.

But foremost of these would be his meeting with Burton to hand over the list of stateless individuals in the Commonwealth.

"We are arranging a series of meetings with members of the U.S. Congress and the administration and Cabinet members to tackle issues affecting the CNMI. We would discuss with them the taxes claimed by federal government, which should be returned to us. I cannot speak more about that. It is being worked on right now," said the governor.

Also, the governor would discuss plans on the creation of the CNMI National Guard, the nonvoting delegation issue, and funding assistance for the Veteran's Cemetery.

The governor is also expected to attend a ceremonial dedication of the World War II Memorial in honor of the men

and women who fought in the World War II to free Europe, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. The governor would also pay his respects to Eddie Chen, the Saipan soldier who was killed in Iraq.

Babauta said his travel to the nation's capital is in part to push through plans to help more than 200 stateless individuals in the Commonwealth. He would discuss with Burton the comprehensive and accurate list of qualified individuals that must be included in the proposed legislation.

Based on records, individuals who are eligible to register as "stateless persons" are those who were born and raised in the Commonwealth between Jan. 1, 1974, and Nov. 4, 1986, whose parents are nonresident aliens. As such, they were not granted U.S. citizenship.

This week is historical preservation week

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The Historic Preservation Office lauded the Pacific Islands Club's contribution to protect the CNMI culture when it turned over to the agency the remains of 34 ancient Chamorro dug up at the hotel poolside area in 1988.

HPO officer Genevieve Cabrera disclosed that during the five-week expansion project at the PIC, workers recovered 34 human remains, which were later prepared for re-interment. The re-interment area was located at the original burial site of the ancient Chamorros, who were believed to have occupied the San Antonio village between 650 A.D. and 450 A.D.

Cabrera said studies have shown that the bones were remains of healthy individuals and that the males were healthier than the females during the said era. "Although they lived near the ocean, there was a lack of evidence of water activities," said the HPO officer.

The re-interment of the 34 remains of ancient Chamorro was highlighted during a proclamation signing ceremony yesterday at the PIC. Gov. Juan N. Babauta endorsed the period of May 24 to 30 as Historic Preservation Week.

With this year's theme "New Frontier in Historic Preserva-



SHAN SEMAN

The man'amko entertain the crowd with a dance performance during yesterday's Historic Week proclamation signing ceremony at the Pacific Islands Club.

tion," the weeklong celebration hopes to foster the need to protect and preserve the CNMI's resources, which endeavors to continually illuminate the legacy of the Commonwealth.

This year's theme shows the extent to which historic preservation programs are involved in protecting America's diverse cultural resources. It is designated throughout the United States to annually mark the significance of this tradition.

"These resources are impor-

tant to the CNMI's economic development. They are equally important, if not more so, to the CNMI community's heightened sense of cultural identity, which is impacted through education," reads the proclamation signing.

To ensure the success of historic preservation, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan HPO offices are set to hold various activities that would raise awareness in the community on the importance of the preservation of the CNMI's culture and rich heritage.

EMO, Navy to detonate vintage bombs on Friday

The Emergency Management Office is warning tour operators, fishermen, commercial planes and the public to stay away from the Laderan Laggun Cliff Line on Friday, during which live ordnance from World War II would be detonated.

The detonation, which will be conducted by a U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal detachment team, will take place Friday between 3pm to 4pm, about a mile north of the Marpi landfill.

EMO director Rudolfo M. Pua said roads from the Last Command Post heading north would be closed as a safety precautions.

"Due to the dangers imposed

Beautification efforts for WWII event in full swing

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Cleanup efforts, led by Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, are ongoing in different parts of Saipan as the island prepares for the commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian, which officially unfolds on June 12.

The cleanup effort, however, requires the assistance of the public, according to 60th Anniversary Beautification Committee chair Cynthia Martin.

"Though there is a special emphasis to make our island beautiful for visitors during the 60th anniversary of the World War II commemoration, Saipan needs all residents' continuing efforts to keep the island clean and beautiful," she said.

The statement included steps businesses and residents can take to assist with the beautification.

These include removing debris from around property; trimming of dead limbs from trees; replacing broken signs; removing outdated signs from windows; power wash mold on buildings, signs, or fences; mowing vacant lots and removing cuttings; removing equipment or damaged cars

by this operation and for the safety of the people, we will clear that area prior to the detonation," he said. "I know there are farms around the area, so I urge farmers to take care of things and vacate the area prior to the detonation time. I urge the public to stay at least one mile away from the area for safety reasons during the time and date of the operation."

The grid coordinates are 15 degrees, 16.90 minutes North, 145 degrees, 49.33 minutes East and 5,000 feet above sea level.

For more information, contact EMO at 322-9572/9529/8001-3 Ext. 23,24, and 31.

(Shan Seman)

DPS educates students on water safety

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety's Boating Safety Section is currently teaching students about water safety, conducting presentations and sessions to fifth grade classes in various schools on Saipan.

Dubbed the Aqua Smart, the program is aimed at providing water safety tips to students.

Boating Safety officers have conducted the program at all public elementary schools with the exception of Oleai Elementary School, which was unable to take part due to a conflict of schedule. The program was also conducted at the Saipan International School, and is currently being conducted at Mount Carmel School. The session at the private school concludes this Thursday with a graduation ceremony.

"The program includes teaching about water pollution, the proper way of wearing a life jacket, and what to do when [you] see a flare being shot into the air," said Boating Safety acting director Sgt. Juan Diaz. "They also learn to swim."

Sessions at Mt. Carmel began yesterday. Each session starts at 8am. Diaz said a little over 50 students would receive certificates of accomplishments after completing the sessions.

Diaz said the response

from the students has been positive since the start of the program this year.

"The kids like the program. It's not often that they get presentations about the marine environment. They are very attentive and show much interest," he said.

DPS commissioner Edward Camacho said the program plays a role in lowering water accidents.

"Our goal is to have 100 percent of the kids to be aqua

smart," he said. "Water accidents are decreasing and when we start with the youth, they carry on the information and are educated in the proper ways of handling water situations for the rest of their lives. It teaches them to be alert and to yell and call 911. We try to teach the kids not to just jump into the water and help someone drowning, because they will put their lives at risk. Instead, they should throw a floating device

to the person in the water."

Diaz said the program is conducted yearly to comply with the requirement of the section to conduct public education. It is funded by the federal government.

The program began in 1996 and has been conducted among schools yearly. This year, the section began conducting the sessions on March. The sessions at Mt. Carmel are the last set for the year.

cars unlimited

Phils. consular services on Tinian and Rota

The Philippine Consulate General on Saipan will conduct field consular services to the Filipino communities in Tinian and Rota Islands June 19-20 and 26-27 (Saturday and Sunday) respectively.

Divided into two teams, the group for Tinian will be headed by Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo, and the group for Rota will be headed by Consul Wenceslao G. Gayola.

The consular services in Tinian will be held at the

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino, while those on Rota, at Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja, from 9am to 5pm (with a one-hour lunch break).

Filipino residents on these islands who wish to avail themselves of these services are advised to be ready with the documentary requirements for their passport, notary and report of birth applications. The consular team will also distribute the Comelec identification cards.

norita

Territorial grants coordinator named

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior David B. Cohen has announced that Marina Tinitali has been hired to coordinate the efforts of the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs to promote accountability for federal grants to the territories.

Tinitali, who was raised in American Samoa, served as an auditor and grant program specialist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"Promoting accountability for federal grants is one of our top priorities, and it's significant that we've hired someone to focus exclusively on that effort," Cohen said in a press release.

Before moving to Washington, D.C., to take her new position, Tinitali served for the past six years in Honolulu managing Federal Emergency Management Agency hazard mitigation grants.

Prior to that, Tinitali was a FEMA auditor based in California for more than nine years. From both locations, Tinitali was involved in FEMA activities in Guam, American Samoa, the CNMI, Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Diego: Economy showing good numbers

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The CNMI economy is slowly picking up and signs of development abound despite reports of an impending massive layoff at the apparel industry, according to Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente.

He also expressed confidence that the garment industry would never totally pull out from the Northern Marianas, noting that the industry is here due to the advantages offered by the CNMI.

In fact, seven months before the worldwide lifting of the quota restrictions in January 2005, Benavente said the CNMI economy is getting better.

"I see a lot of improvements and the number is showing it already. Obvious sign is better and steadier number in garment and tourist from the additional charter flights. These are signs that things are coming back," said Benavente.

He said most of the apparel companies are on Saipan due to these advantages and most of them would stay.

"It is because of the U.S. label

that high end brands are coming in. The quality of the products that we are making here are better than the competition. There is still the advantage of the made in U.S.A., made in the CNMI label, than those products that are being made in other countries," said Benavente.

Despite reports of large-scale reduction in orders and possibly in revenue, Benavente stressed that CNMI would still be okay even with garment factories streamlining their operations and personnel.

He added that other factories may lay off workers but it is because of the new technology and additional labor requirement that are being enforced at the apparel industry.

Regional economist Wali M. Osman had said that, as January 2005 nears, Saipan garment makers would be expected to search for other markets where production costs may be lower.

However, he said it is unlikely that Saipan garment makers would move abroad at once, even under the most difficult conditions.

"The most likely scenario for Saipan's garments is that they will continue to produce at current levels (around \$800-900 million of gross sales) during 2004. If that is to be the case, CNMI's economy will do better this year than in the last two to three years,"

he said in a recently released report.

However, the effects of the impending lifting of quota restriction are now being felt in the CNMI, with the Commonwealth Ports Authority reporting that the Saipan harbor recorded zero growth during its first seven months in fiscal year 2004.

CPA executive director Carlos H. Salas disclosed recently that from October 2003 to April 2004, seaport revenue tonnage was only 17 percent of last year's record and posted zero increases due to slow garment activities at the Saipan harbor.

He urged the CPA board of directors to begin looking at

other possible revenue sources to augment the losses that the Saipan harbor would experience in 2005 when the local apparel industry faces stiffer competition due to the worldwide lifting of quota restrictions.

"What is alarming is, despite the 4-percent increase in seaport revenue from last year's record and seaport meeting bond ratio coverage, is the zero growth in our revenue tonnage because of the slowdown in the garment industry," said Salas.

He explained that the Saipan seaport's outbound cargo used to comprise 21 percent of the outbound revenue tonnage in the last few years. Since the start of this fiscal year up to April 2004, this only reached 17 percent. Outbound revenue tonnage last year was only 20 percent.

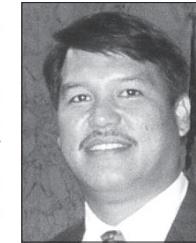
Salas said the rate is alarming and the trend is continuing for several months now beginning last year when the garment industry noted the increased com-

petition from other countries.

The executive director predicted that this trend would continue and that CPA should now explore other possible revenue sources, including non-harbor activities, to augment losses in seaport revenue.

The possible pullout of the garment industry has been predicted to severely affect the shipping industry in the CNMI. In terms of revenue, the industry contributes: 50 percent of CPA port fees; 37 percent of incoming revenue tonnage; 95 percent of outbound revenue tonnage; 65 percent on incoming sea freight; and 99 percent of outbound apparel cargoes that goes through Guam.

The CNMI garment industry has been paying an estimated \$900,000 in ports fees while indirect revenues to the CNMI was recorded to reach \$47.3 million, including \$16.6 million in gas, \$6.8 million in freight and transportation; \$4.7 million in house rentals; \$3.0 million in education; \$2.9 million in insurance; \$1.8 million in land leases, among others.



Benavente

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

The green card and the nation's reputation

We published Thursday a description of the "green-card hell" experienced by a British subject living in Washington who—thanks to pointless immigration red tape—was unable to leave this country to celebrate his father's 90th birthday. It's only one story, but there are many similar ones having to do with immigration to this country since the rules changed after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Over the past two years, nuclear physicists, wealthy business executives and ordinary tourists have been subjected to unreasonable delays and inexplicable refusals from the immigration service. Foreign students are afraid to return home for brief visits, their colleagues no longer wish to study here at all and America's reputation as an open society has been badly damaged.

Until now, the Bush administration has seemed largely unmoved by these stories, apparently viewing the bad publicity they generate abroad as a necessary byproduct of the war on terrorism. In an interview with editors and reporters of The Washington Post this week, however, Tom Ridge, the secretary of homeland security, agreed that the current situation is "not in the best interests of a country that has a tradition of being open and welcoming and diverse." Mr. Ridge said that whenever he goes abroad, visa policy is the first thing U.S. ambassadors want to discuss with him. That situation has, he said, led him to feel it is time to reexamine some of the adjustments to visa policy that were made after Sept. 11, including, among other things, bringing back a modified form of transit visa.

We encourage him in his efforts to "adjust the adjustments," and look forward to hearing more about them.

2004, The Washington Post

THE U.S. WILL HAND OVER POWER TO A NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT IN LESS THAN SIX WEEKS—BUT IT'S STILL NOT CLEAR WHO THAT WILL BE!



Blanding-down history

By ANNE APPLEBAUM
2004, The Washington Post

Over the past few days, the language used to describe the Supreme Court's decision to strike down segregated public education has been inspiring. Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that Brown vs. Board of Education "helped us to understand that the Constitution is 'ours,' whoever we may be." Sen. John Kerry said that it "began to tear down the walls of inequality." President Bush said that on May 17, 1954, "a line had been crossed" in American history.

Nevertheless, when I learned that my son's school intended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that Supreme Court decision this spring, I felt somehow less inspired. The problem was not the principle, but the context: The child in question, who is admittedly very young, has yet to be introduced to the concepts of "Constitution" and "Supreme Court." Maybe they'll get to that eventually, but he hasn't learned much about such matters as the "American Revolution" and "George Washington" either, not to mention "slavery," except what he picked up on the family trip to Mount Vernon.

If Brown was about anything, it was about how the language used by America's founders—words such as "equality" and "freedom"—ultimately proved more powerful than the forces of deep-seated racial prejudice. But if you don't know who America's founders were, or what language they used, or why there was racial prejudice in the first place, then the commemoration necessarily becomes a bland celebration of diversity.

I hope most American children are given more context, and I'm sure that many are. But if they aren't, that won't be surprising. For although a lot of angst has been focused on the dark forces of political correctness in education, the larger problem in many schools is an apolitical one: Nowadays, history is too often drained of any meaning, left- or right-wing, whatsoever.

Partly this is because history, unlike math or science, doesn't lend itself easily to standardized tests. This is clear from the sample questions proudly displayed on the Department of Education's "U.S. History: The Nation's Report Card" Web site. One, designed for fourth graders, shows a picture of a feather. The question beneath it reads: "In pioneer schools, feathers like this were most often used for (a) measuring, (b) sewing, (c) writing, (d) playing a game." On the basis of students' answering "(c)" to questions such as that one,

the National Center for Education Statistics triumphantly declared, in 2001, that the "average scores of fourth and eighth-grade students have improved since 1994."

But testing alone isn't the problem. Recently a group called the American Textbook Council reviewed the standard world history textbooks used between 6th and 12th grades in schools across the country. They found a huge variety of staggering flaws, from phony attempts at relevance, such as comparisons of Odysseus to Indiana Jones, to bad writing and design. Proliferating cartoons, sidebars and trivia drown out the main narrative. The need to touch on everything from the Mongols to Renaissance women to the Holocaust leads to discussions of genocide so compact and simplistic as to be offensive:

"Genocide is an attempt to kill all the people or members of a certain group. Why would one group of people want to completely destroy another group of people? One reason a group of people commits genocide is hatred."

But the worst offense is a tone of cheerful, sanitized neutrality so overwhelming that it actually renders the prose a historical. Thus in a section on "Life Behind the Iron Curtain," middle-schoolers are taught both that "Communist governments in Eastern Europe granted their people few freedoms," and that "in some ways, Communist governments did take care of their citizens. Food prices were low. Health care was free," as if all prices really were low and health care really was free in economic systems that depended upon bribery and connections. Thus in a unit on the Industrial Revolution, students are asked how they would react if forced to become child laborers—"Would you join a union, go to school, or run away?"—as if there actually were unions, universal education and places for children to run to in early-19th century Britain. Thus in a chapter on Africa, the word "tribe" is carefully avoided. Good teachers can and do overcome bad textbooks, but they clearly have an uphill battle.

The issue, then, is not merely the absence of the dead white men: The issue is the absence of both dead white men and slavery, the absence of both the Constitution and the violence that was used to preserve it. To put it differently, the issue is the low expectations we now have of our children, whom we too often judge incapable of hearing the truth. If we want them, someday, to understand why judges and senators and presidents think Brown was so inspiring, we will eventually have to teach them the parts of the story that precede the happy ending.

Politics keeps great cars off our shores

By WARREN BROWN
2004, The Washington Post

Car culture is more than glistening sheet metal and roaring engines. It's also politics. Consider the matter of fuel economy.

You'd think that with regular unleaded gasoline prices topping \$2 a gallon in the United States, both government and automotive industry officials would be hard at work developing practical, workable solutions to reduce fuel consumption.

You'd think that companies such as General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and DaimlerChrysler AG—all of which do a splendid job of selling snazzy, fuel-efficient little cars overseas—now would jump at the opportunity to sell many of those same models in America.

Most certainly, you'd think that stalwart environmental groups such as the Sierra Club would support such a move.

You'd better think again.

The same GM that sells economical but zippy Opel Astra cars and wagons in Germany is reluctant to ship them to the United States primarily because it does not want to get into trouble with the United Auto Workers union.

U.S. automotive executives, of course, never come right out and say that. They offer other seemingly plausible reasons for keeping their hot little runners in Europe. They argue that Americans, even with rising fuel prices, don't really like small cars—the success of models such as the Mini Cooper, Mazda3 and Toyota Prius notwithstanding.

The executives also point to "unfavorable currency exchange rates." Put another way, building and shipping cars in strong euros and selling them in weak dollars is not a recipe for profitability—especially not in a U.S. market where many consumers equate small cars with low prices, which means they would be reluctant to pay extra money to make up the dollar-euro deficit.

But if you listen carefully to the corporate demurrs, you'll hear something else. "We have a partnership with the UAW, and we have to work with them," Richard Wagoner, GM's chairman and chief executive officer, said in a recent interview in St. Tropez, France.

To better understand that politesse, you may want pull from the archives an Op-Ed column that appeared in The New York Times on Feb. 18. The piece, co-authored by UAW President Ron Gettelfinger and Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope, attacked a Bush administration proposal to base federal fuel-economy standards on vehicle weight and type.

That proposal, still nascent, effectively would set up different fuel-economy standards for different vehicle categories—a radical turnaround from the current broad-brush approach of setting one overall standard for "trucks" and another for "cars."

Under that current "corporate average" fuel economy (CAFE) standard, car companies are forbidden from using their foreign fleets to get a better overall fuel economy rating. For example, cars sold as imports cannot be counted for CAFE fleet-averaging reasons with those sold as domestics. They must be counted separately.

The effect of the current CAFE rule, Gettelfinger and Pope said in their editorial, "has been to keep good jobs in America."

"Without a fleet-wide standard, the auto companies would be free to shift the production of smaller, less profitable vehicles from the United States to overseas."

Put another way, the UAW does not make many of those small, fuel-efficient cars. It makes bigger, less-fuel-efficient pickup trucks and sport-utility vehicles, which brings up another point. In the matter of SUVs, whose sale I support as long as consumers are willing to pay for them, the UAW and Sierra Club have been at loggerheads. The Sierra Club routinely campaigns for the demise of SUVs. The UAW protests, citing freedom of choice in the marketplace and job protection for the thousands of Americans who make a living selling and servicing SUVs.

Also, there's this: Tens of thousands of small, fuel-efficient cars are assembled every year in the United States. But those cars are assembled by Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Motor Co. and Nissan Motor Co., all of which the UAW, so far, has failed to organize. That's interesting, because while the UAW warns about the possible loss of American jobs to overseas markets, it generally says nothing about the nearly 70,000 largely nonunion jobs directly provided by foreign car manufacturers doing business in the United States.

In the interim, gasoline prices continue to rise. Some American consumers are beginning to shy away from the pickup trucks and SUVs built by the UAW. And European car buyers, beset by petroleum prices that are now nearly four times the equivalent dollar-price-per-gallon of regular unleaded gasoline in the United States, are driving some of the best, safest, most imaginative small cars ever made.

Truth behind prison abuse scandal lies in the nods and winks

By JAMES RON
Special to The Baltimore Sun

Since the Iraq prison abuse scandal broke, commentators have focused on the question of responsibility. Was the abuse independently devised by individual guards? Was it ordered by superiors? If so, how highly placed were they?

The New Yorker reported that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld secretly authorized "physical coercion and sexual humiliation" against detainees. According to The New York Times, U.S. soldiers charged with abuse have told investigators that they were following orders.

U.S. officials deny such allegations, suggesting it is inconceivable that their leaders would ever give instructions to beat helpless victims, force prisoners to masturbate or tie them up like dogs.

Who is telling the truth?

I have studied torture and other conflict-related abuses for 12 years, first as an investigator for Human Rights Watch, later as a sociologist. Increasingly, I realize how elusive the notion of responsibility often is. Orders come in many shapes and forms, and soldiers often respond to tacit hints, not explicit commands.

Such vagueness can explain why post-abuse accounts often radically diverge. Soldiers claiming to have followed orders believe they are telling the truth, but so do the leaders who deny responsibility.

A decade ago, I interviewed an Israeli military police officer who admitted beating Palestinian prisoners in 1988, when the first uprising against Israeli rule began. First Sgt. A.M.—not his real name—had served in the Al-Fara military prison in the northern West Bank during his reserve duty and, like the other soldiers I interviewed, spoke on the condition he wouldn't be identified. He later appeared on Israeli television to tell his tale.

A.M. said that when Palestinian prisoners refused to answer questions, interrogators ordered him to use violence. "We hit them everywhere," he recalled. "Head, face, mouth, arms, testicles. Interrogations were a combination of beating and questions."

When the blows did not work, interrogators poured an astringent liquid on open wounds to cause further pain.

Individual Israeli interrogators had ordered these beatings, but who had instructed them?

In November 1987, an official Israeli inquiry, widely known as the Landau Commission, reported that coercion, including "criminal assault," had been used by Israel's General Security Services. Israel subsequently introduced new interrogation guidelines.

Other cases were even more difficult to pin down. Interviews with dozens of Israelis involved in suppressing Palestinian demonstrations during 1988, for example, said that an orgy of beatings stemmed from vaguely worded instructions to use violence coupled with the widespread distribution of wooden clubs. The events were broadly publicized at the time.

According to one senior combat officer, written orders were circulated to field commanders in January 1988 telling them to "beat rioters." There were no strict guidelines as to when the beatings were to stop. Individual commanders had some leeway when deciding how best to proceed. Some used their clubs only when Palestinians resisted arrest, but others beat demonstrators long after they were bound and subdued.

As two Israeli military correspondents, Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, later wrote in their book "Intifada": "There were countless incidents in which young Arabs were dragged behind walls of deserted buildings and systematically beaten all but senseless."

When questioned, top Israeli officials truthfully said they had never ordered such behavior. Lower-ranking personnel honestly claimed to have followed orders. They had received vaguely worded instructions coupled with nods and winks, and they had responded appropriately.

As U.S. military investigators question the men and women charged with torturing Iraqi detainees, they will be looking for concrete, written orders to commit specific acts. If no such evidence emerges, they will likely conclude the torturers acted alone.

When questions are so narrowly framed, however, they reveal little. To understand why crimes of war occur, we must probe further, uncovering the complex web of tacit signals and understandings that motivate soldiers' behavior.

Fuzzy claims about tacit orders may not withstand legal cross-examination, but it is in such vague formulations that the truth often lies.

Ron, Canada research chair in conflict and human rights at McGill University in Montreal, is the author of "Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel."

Letters to the Editor

Siapan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

To Ms. Malone

First, I want to thank you, Juanita S. Malone, for giving me the opportunity to clarify this matter for you and others that share your opinion. First, you should wait until you hear both sides, the same practice used by the courts before writing opinions, especially in the news.

People have thrown boomerangs at me in the news and now you want to paddle me. What is it with these physical attacks? You admitted Taney's decision contributed to the civil war but you never admitted he was wrong. I just happened to be the tip of the spear for change and sometimes, ugly things happen in the process to improve society such as the civil war. This matter won't start a war but its basically about the same thing, the rights of people and their freedoms.

I am not proud of what I did and you should know it was the creativity to express the truth that caught Mr. Guerrero by surprise. It was also board members that leaked this to the press to slander me in the eyes of the community. Neither students nor the public would have ever known about this matter. I have never taught students to do such things but students do understand the freedoms that are granted under the Constitution. Students also understand that all forms of freedom of expression may not be likeable or even acceptable in certain commun-

ties but it is the right of every citizen. And now you want to physically abuse me for exercising my rights. Doesn't your desire Ms. Malone to paddle me remind you of how slaves were beaten for the smallest of things? Does a finger deserve a beating?

It is also apparent that you don't consider me a person of authority almost equal to any other BOE member. Mr. Guerrero and the chair are my fellow BOE members and I can communicate with them on an equal level. This is the same problem that I have been having with Mr. Guerrero.

You also seem to think that "collective bargaining" is MY goal. You are dead wrong. Collective bargaining is the goal of Teachers—something every teacher on the mainland has acquired. I am just trying to help teachers achieve this goal and right that has been theirs since 1935 under federal law and since 1985 under the CNMI Constitution. The Teachers of the CNMI chose well when they picked me and it's just a matter of time before you and all my critics come to the realization that Mr. Bennett was right.

Ambrose M. Bennett

Teacher Representative

A Pagan appeal

I heard there are some concerns about the Pagan mining issue from some of the taotao-tano who used to live there and in the Gani. This mining of Pagan needs to be complied with the self-determination of the Gani people. I am Chamorro from Guahan and, although Guam is politically separated from the now CNMI, Guahan Chamorros are still ancestrally connected with all of the Chamorro archipelago (Mariana Islands).

Please, Chamorro brothers and sisters of CNMI, don't destroy Pagan just for money. Money is a Western perspective and has

done many bad things for us. Respect the rights of the taotao-tano of Pagan and i Ge'iliu'sha na islas. Hamyu ni' umespipiha para umaso'so' i guinahan Pagan, gof-adahi sa' yanggin tailayi yan inachaki in atutitiyi put i tano' Chamorro Pagan, ti apmam mamaneutnut hamyu ni chetnut maipe. Saena ma'ase'.

Jose U. Garrido

by e-mail

Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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A. Samoa first lady subpoenaed in bank probe

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—The American Samoan governor's wife, Maryanne Togiola Tulafono, has made an appearance before the Senate Select Investigative Committee.

The First Lady, a former chairperson of the Development Bank of American Samoa was subpoenaed together with present chairman

Liufau Tanielu Sonoma to explain the bank's loan policies and procedures.

Committee Chairman Senator Lualemaga Faoa says audit reports of the Development Bank show the bank committed many violations and this was an indication that the bank was not following procedures.

Liufau said the auditors comments

are to help the board and bank managers make improvements and should be taken in that context.

Senator Te'o Fuavai tried to ask about the loan for a business in which one of the principals was the wife of the bank president but was stopped by the chairman because of the committee's agreement with bank officials that no names would be used.

PNG lawmaker helps families pay school fees

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—Francis Kuna, member of parliament for Jimi Open in the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, has allocated K85,000 (US\$26,300) from his 2003 District Support Grant funds to school fees for students attending different schools in the province for the 2004 academic year.

He said he was focused on educating many young people from his electorate and wanted to support those who were struggling in meeting the cost of education.

Mr Kunai responded to letters and requests by parents who wrote to him re-

questing school fee assistance this year.

"My office had received a lot of requests for assistance with fees, which I am only able to assist those who wrote to me," he said.

He said only the students and parents who had requested in writing for fees would benefit from the money allocated.

"It is very difficult at this time of financial crisis. I am unable to entertain all Jimi students throughout Papua New Guinea. My office was able to allocate a total of K85,000 to assist with fees," said Mr Kunai.

The breakdown of the fees and grants included Jimi High School K10,000,

Karap Primary School K10,000 and Jimi River Primary School with K5,000.

Other institutions that received school fee allocations included Holy Trinity Demonstration Teacher's College K900; Highlands Agriculture Training Centre K400; Tinsley District hospital K500; and Fatima Secondary K3700.

More than K28,000 was also distributed to other primary and secondary schools in his electorate. Mr Kunai also gave K20,000 to the Community Based Education, a proposal, which would include the community to help students who were primary school dropouts. The remaining K16,900 was paid to other institutions within the country.

REPORT

From Page 1

bank was selling EIE properties to recover loans, and that the affected properties were worth around ¥1.2 trillion yen. (\$1=112.35 yen)

Shinsei was quoted, though, in the Bloomberg report as saying that the amicable settlement doesn't mean that the bank admits to the accusations.

"We have sufficient counterarguments and protection against the claims, yet we agreed to compromise as this was a burden on us that was likely to continue longer," it added.

Bloomberg further said that Shinsei, which contested the claims earlier, will ask the government-run Deposit Insurance Corp. of Japan to contribute ¥17.4 billion to the settlement amount, in line with a 2000 agreement.

Bloomberg said that Deposit Insurance Corp., which mediated the settlement, confirmed the agreement but didn't confirm the settlement amount.

Ripplewood Holdings LLC, which led a group of U.S. investment firms to

acquire Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan in 2000, reportedly agreed with DIC at the time that liabilities resulting from any lawsuits that exceeded ¥5 billion would be guaranteed by the agency.

Shinsei has reportedly already set aside ¥5 billion against a possible loss from the lawsuit.

The suit claimed that former managers of Long-Term Credit Bank "actively conspired to defraud EIE" by taking control of the Hyatt Regency Saipan Hotel and estates in Australia, the Pacific Rim, Europe and the U.S. and selling them below market prices, the suit claimed.

Meantime, Calvo was quoted in the Bloomberg report that the "global settlement" will be closed on June 16 in Tokyo.

Such settlement would resolve the civil actions in Tokyo, California, and Saipan.

The Saipan Tribune tried to obtain comments from Calvo and Fitzgerald but both were unavailable.

The case filed on Saipan includes EIE International Corp. and Jordan Services Ltd. represented by the Calvo

and Clark law office as plaintiff.

The case was against Shinsei Bank Ltd., aka The Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan Ltd.; Credit Suisse First Boston (Hong Kong) Ltd.; Saipan Portopia Corp Hotel Corp., aka Portopia Saipan Hotel Corp. doing business as Hyatt Regency Hotel Saipan, and Does 1-20.

Last April, Jordan Services Limited accused an officer of the firm that owns the Hyatt Regency Saipan of perjury in a lawsuit involving the Shinsei Bank.

In this lawsuit, Jordan and EIE International Corp. sued the bank and Saipan Portopia Hotel Corp., which acquired the Hyatt Regency Saipan sometime in 1991.

Jordan accused Portopia officer Tsutomu Nakauchi of lying to the court on different aspects in connection with the purchase of Hyatt. Jordan, represented by lawyer Pedro M. Atalig, requested the Superior Court to vacate an earlier order on the summary judgment request filed by Portopia, saying that such request was anchored on perjured testimony.

that, when it is time to turn them over to the U.S. House and Senate, it will take a truck to deliver them," said Tenorio. "I am sure that it will be an overwhelming display of support."

The U.S. House Resources Committee held a hearing February 25 on the CNMI delegate issue, and heard positive testimony from the U.S. administration, Tenorio, Gov. Juan N. Babauta, and Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano. A bill related to this is expected to be introduced soon.

For additional information, call Ana Teregeyo in the District Office at (670) 664-5651.

experience the democratic process, and let their voice be heard also," said Tenorio.

Petitions are available at the Resident Representative's District Office on Capitol Hill, House # 1345, and on the Resident Representative's website.

Petitions are due back at either the Washington D.C. Office or the District Office no later than May 31. They can either be dropped off in person or faxed. The DC office fax number is (202) 673-5873 and the District Office fax number is (670) 664-5654.

"I encourage all registered voters and students to sign the petition. I hope

legislative process," said Tenorio.

He had launched two signature drives and both are currently being circulated. The first is for registered voters and the second is for students.

The petitions would be presented to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

"Signatures of registered voters are of course important as they will be the ones exercising their constitutional rights to select a representative, but I also want our young people to

Indicted Fiji vice president allowed to travel

SUVA, Fiji (Radio Fiji/PIR)—The Vice President Ratu Jope Seniloli is free to leave the country to seek medical treatment despite a pending criminal case, after the Suva High Court agreed to release his passport.

Ratu Jope's lawyers had filed legal papers seeking a variation to the conditions of his bail so that Ratu Jope can go to Sydney for a medical review.

The director of public prosecutions office had opposed his application but Justice Anthony Gates ruled that

the vice president can travel before the June 15, which is when his case will be heard.

The court ruled that Ratu Jope must re-lodge his passport with the High Court no later than the eighth of next month.

Ratu Jope is among a group of five that are awaiting trial for charges related to the May 2000 coup. He is alleged to have taken an unlawful oath to commit a capital offence and another oath to engage in a seditious enterprise.

Tokelau says it doesn't want independence

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—The leader of tiny Tokelau, a Pacific territory of New Zealand, says the islanders are being pressured into becoming independent.

Head of Government Patuki Isa'ako has questioned plans by the United Nations and New Zealand to require a vote on the question of self-determination.

Isa'ako says the push toward self-determination is not being driven by Tokelauans.

Tokelau, north of Samoa, has a population of less than 1,500 Polynesians on three atolls with a total land area of about 10 square kilometers.

The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization and Wellington have been pushing Tokelau to hold a vote on whether to remain part of New Zealand, or to become self-governing or independent.

Tokelauans have been reluctant to support any change in status.

NEW

From Page 1

escape, which proceeded to trial with attorney Antonio Atalig representing him.

The court had found Camacho guilty of escape and sentenced him to two years to be served consecutively to the 45-year sentence.

Subsequent to the April trial, Camacho had requested new counsel citing that Atalig never interviewed him about the offense nor returned his telephone calls from prison.

In the hearing, the defendant was represented by lawyer Matthew Smith.

For his part, Wiseman noted that Atalig was notified about the hearing but did not show up.

He said that the 6th amendment right to effective assistance of counsel is not intended to improve the quality of legal presentation, although that is the goal of considerable importance to the legal system, but "the purpose is simply to ensure that criminal defendants receive a fair trial."

"The court, based on the above facts...concludes that they had a substantial and injurious impact on the outcome, and that the defendant is entitled to habeas relief."

He said the court found that there was "unwaivable conflict" following findings that a witness in the escape trial was also a convict with several convictions and a former client of Atalig.

MOCK

From Page 1

victim rescue, triage, treatment and decontamination, assessment, agent identification, site security and crowd control, render-safe procedures on devices or weapons, monitoring for contamination, contamination control, and waste material packaging.

Pua said the operation is funded through the State Homeland Security Grant Program by the Office for Domestic Preparedness under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He did not clarify the approximate amount that was granted.

"In fiscal year 2003, the Office of Domestic Preparedness provided millions that was broken down into four categories—planning, training, exercise, and equipment. We still have funds, and it will be used for the operation," he said.

"This fact was not disclosed. The testimony of these witnesses was relied upon to convict the defendant," said Wiseman.

Further, the judge cited failure to investigate as well as failure to impeach during cross-examination of witnesses "notwithstanding their several convictions and incarcerations."

Wiseman further said that the counsel did not introduce any physical evidence, despite the fact that during the line up, the victim of robbery that occurred during the escape did not identify the defendant.

He said the counsel did not object to the admission of a witness statement that was introduced into evidence by the prosecutor which was not authenticated.

"In view of the foregoing it is ordered that the writ of habeas corpus is granted and that the relief shall be that the judgment of Camacho is hereby vacated and defendant shall receive a new trial," said Wiseman.

The jury in 1999 found that the murder victim, Antonio Sablan, was stabbed 37 times by the convicted minor in their house, as part of the initiation rites for membership in the Red Rum gang.

Sablan was reportedly a star athlete from Hopwood Junior High School.

Camacho's two co-defendants, both minors, had entered into a plea agreement and served as witnesses for the government. Each of them was sentenced to two years in jail.

Pua said the exercise would be conducted annually.

"The goals of Operation Safe Harbor are to validate the CNMI Emergency Operations Plan, Terrorism Response Annex, and Hazardous Material procedures. The evaluators will also look at the community and local entities' roles, responsibilities, and plans and procedures in response to an act of WMD/terrorism," he stressed.

Agencies involved in the operation include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Coast Guard, American Red Cross, the Department of Public Safety, Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Quality, Department of Mental Health, Commonwealth Health Center, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting, Division of Customs, and the Department of Public Works.

GTC launches Readathon craze, book fair

By LEORA NGIRABLOSCH
GTC STUDENT TEACHER

Months of planning and preparation have resulted in one of the CNMI's most inspiring school reading programs, with chairpersons Del Babauta and Charlotte Camacho stimulating over 300 Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School students to read over 2,000 books in two weeks.

During these two weeks, GTC students were also introduced to the magic of reading by the guest appearances of several community dignitaries, from Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente to PSS Commissioner Edward Camacho and Education Commissioner Rita H. Inos.

"The message we try to convey throughout these activities is that reading is very important even if it takes a mere 10 minutes a day. That little amount of time to just sit and read will lead to so much more success," said co-chair Camacho.

During these two weeks of reading excitement, GTC students brought out the books that they made in their classrooms to share with the schools. The cafeteria is usually quiet after the students eat quickly and go outside to play. However, during these two weeks of the Readathon Craze, kids chose to stay indoors to read their books to others or to read the books others have written.

The GTC staff believes that this Book Fair was fun enough

to encourage more writing and reading among their students.

The GTC Parents Association also had a chance to view the literature created by the kids when they arrived for a Parents Teachers Association meeting.

Spirit Week was also in effect to promote attendance for these events, as well as cooperation among the students. Monday was Inside Out Day, Tuesday was Mismatch Day, Wednesday was Hat or Sunglasses Day, Thursday was Crazy Hair Day, and Friday was the Field Day.

As a finale of the Readathon Craze, Field Day was planned with activity booths like bookmaking, sand art crafts, music and movement, flag football, and a colorful parachute game for the students.

The Field Day ended with an award ceremony that gave out recognition as well as incentives like pizza coupons, movie passes, and ice cream coupons to kids who read the most books, the class that read the most books, and the class with the most spirit.

"Next year we will do this Readathon craze over a longer period of time so that the kids will be able to read more books," said GTC principal Babauta.

"This was a first readathon for GTC school and what a success it was. There are endless possibilities of greater success for this coming school year. Great job, readers, and don't forget to read during the summer also," she added.



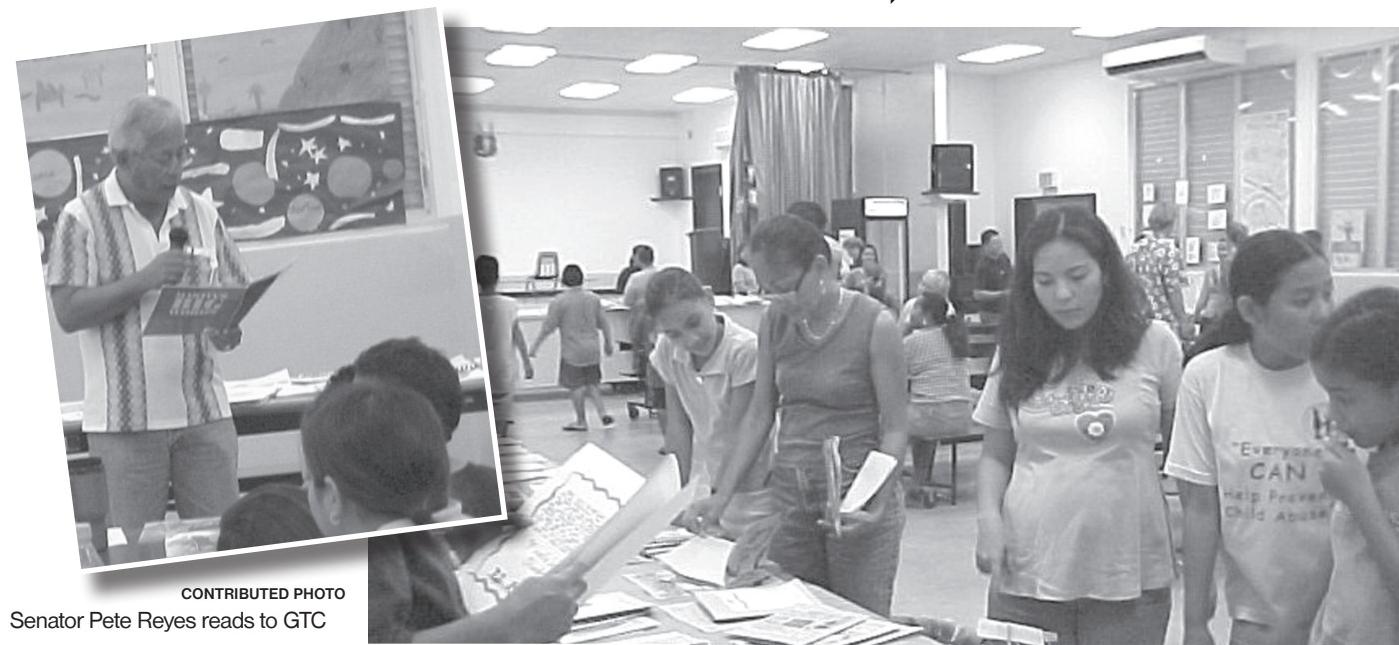
GTC Principal Babauta and 3rd Grade Teacher Ms. Moore present a certificate of appreciation for Celebrity Readers like DPS Commissioner Edward Camacho.

Licensing board to hold exams

The Board of Professional Licensing said that it would be giving the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Principles and Practice of Engineering Examination (Civil, Structural, Electrical, and Mechanical) and Professional Land Surveying Examination on Oct. 29, 2004 and the Fundamentals of Engineering and Fundamentals of Land Surveying Examination on Oct. 30, 2004.

Applications to take the examinations must be submitted to the Board of Professional Licensing Office no later than July 1, 2004.

For additional information, contact the Board at 234-5897 or fax us at 234-6040 or come by its office at the 2nd floor of the Island Commercial Center Building (above Multi-Line Supply), Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GTC Parents take part in reading student-made books displayed during the readathon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



DPS Commissioner Ed Camacho reads the *Very Clumsy Click Beetle* by Eric Carle to first graders.



Kids make books in an outdoor tent with supplies and inspiration from nature and San Roque Beach.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Parachute game was colorful and fun.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

crees

Island Snapshots



CHECKPOINT

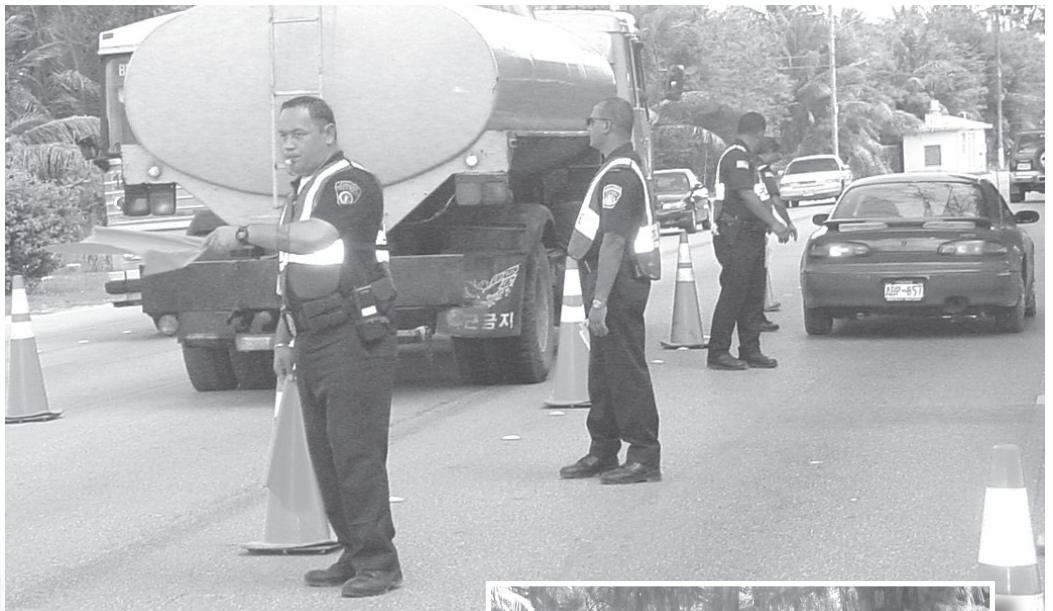
Sgt. Sylvan M. Rangamar supervises while DPS public information officer Rose T. Ada of the Traffic Section jots down important information during yesterday's checkpoint.

SHAN SEMAN

HOLD IT!

Officers in the Department of Public Safety Traffic Section conducts an Occupant Protection and Child Restraint and Sobriety checkpoint south of the World War II tank on Beach Road in Chalan Lau Lau yesterday afternoon.

SHAN SEMAN



STARTING 'EM YOUNG

Dan Dan Elementary School students get ready prior to a performance during the school's Cultural Day celebration last Saturday.

CASSIE FEJERAN



HERE YOU GO

Gov. Juan N. Babauta, second from right, and Historic Preservation Office director Epriphano Cabrera present a plaque to the Pacific Islands Club during the Historic Preservation Week proclamation signing ceremony yesterday at the PIC.

SHAN SEMAN

COCKFIGHT PIT

Division of Agriculture director Donald G. Flores, left, and Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero pose for a photo in front of the cockfight pit at the Civic Center. The cockfight is one of the many activities set to take place this weekend as part of the 25th Saipan Agriculture Fair celebration.

SHAN SEMAN



SPIFFED UP

The 4-H building at Civic Center was renovated by the Division of Agriculture and will be used for the Saipan Agriculture Fair. Renovation cost was about \$13,000.

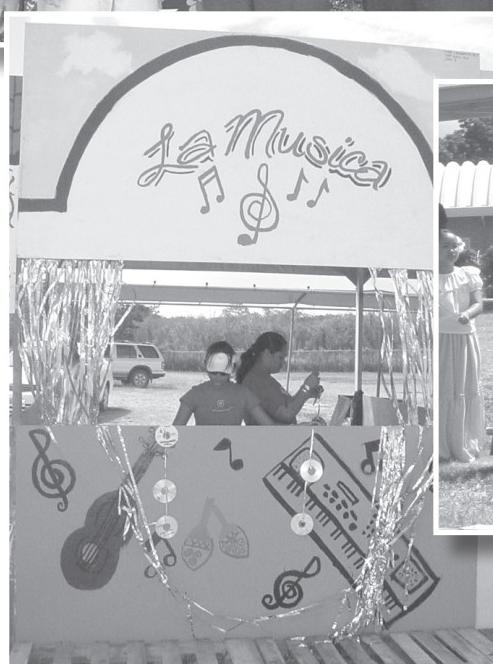
SHAN SEMAN



LA MUSICA

Students managing the La Musica booth were busy during the Saipan Southern High School Cultural Day celebration.

CASSIE FEJERAN



BEAT THIS

Dancers entertain the crowd with a striking performance during the Saipan Southern High School Cultural Day celebration.

CASSIE FEJERAN

WASHINGTON AT A GLANCE

CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities executive director Thomas J. Camacho, third left back, met with friends, former U.S. Rep. and Ambassador David Funderburk, Ph.D., first left back; Ambassador for the Republic of Albania Fatos Tarifa, Ph.D., second left back; Camacho; and U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, Jr. (Northern Carolina), fourth left back, at the Republican Capitol Hill Club. Also in the photo are Arta Tarifa, the Albanian ambassador's wife, first left front. Camacho also met new friends: KIA Motors CEO Ariana Berber from Albania, second left front, and Valentina Leskaj, Member of Parliament, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, third left front.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

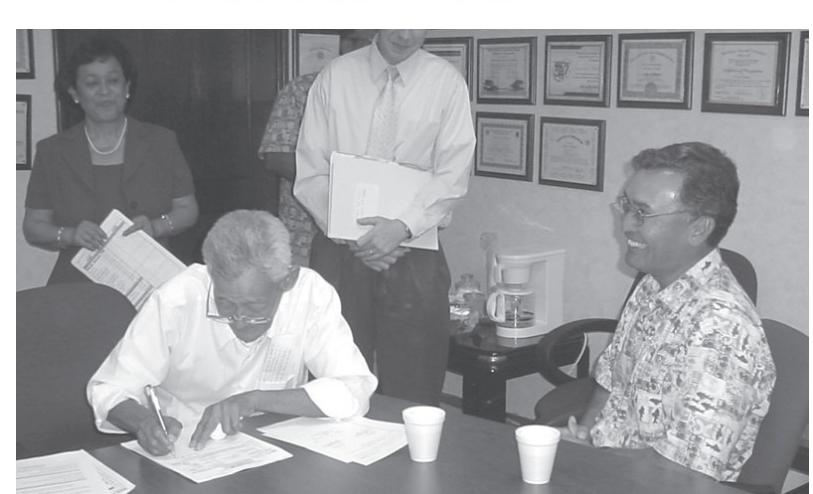
THE SCHOOL POSSE

Saipan Southern High School students strike a pose for a photo during the school's Cultural Day festival last Saturday.

CASSIE FEJERAN



THE LOCAL BAR CASSIE FEJERAN
The Saipan Southern High School Cultural Day last Saturday also featured various vendors.



ACTING THE PART

Jose Torres signs a bill into law while serving as governor during last Thursday's Man'amko Take Over Day as incumbent Gov. Juan N. Babauta looks on.

SHAN SEMAN

Business

Hope grows for pugua

GUAM (PDN/PIR)—As the clouds of the rainy season build on the horizon, the island's betel nut lovers wonder what effect the change in weather will have on the killer fungus that has destroyed thousands of betel nut trees in the southern villages.

Last month, the Department of Agriculture completed its survey of the southern villages to determine how widespread the fungal infection is and to instruct growers of betel nut, known as pugua in Chamorro, to cut down and burn any trees that show signs of the deadly fungus.

In a little over a month, the agriculture-department teams surveyed 20,265 trees and found that 5,065, or one quarter, are infected, said Carol Ada, agricultural inspector at the plant inspection station. She estimated that the number of infected trees is closer to 10,000, including the more difficult-to-reach trees in the boonies deep in the valleys of Merizo. She didn't have an estimate of how many trees have perished because of the fungus.

Agriculture officials worry that when the rainy season and its associated windy storms arrive around July, the fungus could spread much faster than it has over the last several months, said Roland Quitugua, a University of Guam agricultural extension agent.

But the visit of an off-island scientist provided another ray of hope in the gloomy situation, he said. An Australian plant-disease expert who came to the island to collect samples of the fungus has recommended a fungicide that can be injected into pugua trees, protecting them from the fungus for up to a year, and even curing mildly-infected trees.

He said the government of Guam is in the process of procuring the fungicide and hopes to get a good supply of it on island in June.

The exact identity of the fungus still has not been determined, though it may be the same fungus that wiped out all of Saipan's betel nut trees several years ago.

Around September last year, the swiftly moving fungus began infecting and killing pugua trees in Merizo and on the perimeter of Umatac and Inara-

jan. Once infected, the trees die within weeks. The only way to stop the fungus, which is spread by spores in the wind and rain, is to cut down the infected trees and burn them.

Beginning this week, agriculture teams will begin canvassing Merizo again, injecting fungicide into trees on farms where the infected pugua have been cut down and burned, and helping destroy pugua when necessary.

The cooperation of pugua growers is essential for the success of the eradication program, Quitugua said, because the agriculture department does not have the resources to destroy all of the trees on their own.

Without that cooperation, he said, it will be impossible to eradicate the disease before it spreads.

But it is easier said than done in the case of Jose "Yogi" Cruz of Merizo, who has several hundred pugua trees, and who does not have a chainsaw to help him with the task of cutting down the infected trees.

The fungus, which followed the also-destructive Supertyphoon Pongsona, has had a heavy impact on Cruz's pocketbook.

Before the typhoon and fungus, Cruz would harvest enough betel nut to make about \$500 weekly. Now, he makes almost no money.

"It was a good business before, but not anymore," he said.

Pugua grower Ana Tyquiengco, 56, of Merizo also worried that the fungus will affect her family's finances.

She said that between their ranch and home, she and her husband have lost close to 100 pugua trees.

She said that her husband and her children like to chew the betel nut. Betel nut produces a bitter red juice that is known for being a mild stimulant.

Tyquiengco said she is concerned about what might happen if more of the island's betel nut crops are killed.

"We use the betel nut we grow and it saves us money from buying them from other places, but if all the betel nut trees are to die, then we have no choice but to buy from other people ... and betel nut is very expensive," she said.

Poor air service limits Solomons tourism

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (SIBC/PIR)—Airline linkage between Solomon Islands and Europe remains a major obstacle to tourism in Solomon Islands.

This is according to a Tourism Expert Robert Cleverdon who recently visited Solomon Islands promoting the 2005 Tourism partnership meeting to be held in Nadi, Fiji, next year.

He said the non-existence of direct air links between these two countries is making it hard for European tourists reaching Solomon Islands.

Mr Cleverdon said this problem must be addressed if Solomon Islands is to see an increase in the number of tourists from Europe visiting Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands is receiving the bulk of its tourist arrivals from Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Solomon Airlines has been sharing seats with Air Vanuatu and Nauru because it doesn't have any aircraft of its own and is comfortable with the system as it is very expensive to manage bigger aircraft.



Part of the estimated 100 participants in last Friday's training at Dai-Ichi Hotel.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Safety training held for 100 participants

The Northern Marianas Alliance for Safety and Health provided specialized training to over 100 participants from the private and public sectors in OSHA's Confined Spaces for General Industry last Friday at the Dai Ichi Hotel on Saipan.

OSHA Institute's Linda Spurling, an industrial hygienist, conducted a three-hour training session in recognition of hazards in confined spaces, most commonly seen in the islands' water tank systems, for government agencies and private company health and safety personnel.

Spurling was provided to NMASH through OSHA Region IX Administrator Frank



OSHA Institute's Linda Spurling, an industrial hygienist, conducts the three-hour training session.

Strasheim's consent. Spurling was in Guam from May 18-20 conducting training in the

Guam Contractor/OSHA Consultation Conference.

NMASH co-Chairman Rich-

ard A. Pierce noted that this training session will serve as a prelude to Gov. Juan N. Babauta's 2nd Annual Health and Safety Conference to be held this August. Last year's four-day conference attracted 190 registrants.

NMASH is comprised of the OSHA Institute, OSHA Region IX, the Northern Marianas College, the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality, the CNMI Department of Public Safety, the CNMI Department of Labor, the CNMI Department of Public Works, the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association, The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Saipan Contractors Association and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

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Saudis promise to increase oil to US



By BRUCE STANLEY
AP BUSINESS WRITER

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP)—Saudi Arabia has assured the United States that it will supply up to 2 million barrels a day in additional crude oil if the market demands it, the U.S. Energy Secretary said Sunday.

Saudi Arabia has pledged to pump an additional 600,000 barrels a day starting in June, lifting its daily output to 9.1 million barrels, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham told reporters at an Amsterdam hotel after meeting privately with Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi.

"He also stated that going forward they will meet all requests up to their full capacity of 10.5 million barrels a day. I think this was a very important comment on his part," Abraham said.

He said he expected the new Saudi commitment would help reassure oil markets about the reliability of supplies.

Oil prices have soared above \$40 a barrel in recent weeks due to fears about instability in Iraq and other oil-rich Gulf countries, bottlenecks in gasoline production at U.S. refineries, and an unforeseen burst in global demand, particularly from China and the United States.

Any fresh Saudi crude would take several weeks to reach U.S. ports, and American motorists are unlikely to benefit right away from lower pump prices for gasoline. However, the Saudi pledge came as a welcome message.

The 11-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting

Countries, which supplies about a third of the world's crude, has come under intense pressure from the United States and other oil-importing countries to boost output to calm markets and reduce prices. Saudi Arabia is OPEC's most influential member, and it alone has significant unused capacity to pump more oil quickly.

Abraham met with Naimi during a three-day conference of energy producing and consuming nations.

The Saudi Oil Ministry proposed Friday that OPEC increase its production ceiling by 2 million barrels a day, or 8.5 percent. At the same time, it pledged to raise its own output to at least 9 million barrels in June.

Although OPEC expressed concern about the sharp rise in oil prices, it announced Saturday it was deferring a decision about increasing its ceiling until it meets June 3 in Beirut.

Naimi's assurances to Abraham were the most explicit Saudi commitment to produce at this higher level since oil prices reached the psychologically important threshold of \$40.

They also represent a dramatic shift in Saudi policy: OPEC members, led by Saudi Arabia, agreed as recently as March to cut production by 1 million barrels a day in anticipation of a lull in seasonal demand.

Demand picked up instead, to OPEC's surprise. U.S. gasoline prices hit new highs as motorists prepared for the peak summer driving season, and OPEC has borne the brunt of demands for more oil.

Bush says key election states are hiring

WACO, Texas (AP)—President Bush is pointing at "Help Wanted" signs in key election states as evidence that "America's jobs engine is running strong."

Employment has been lagging in the economic recovery. So when the president got good news from the Labor Department, he shared it Saturday with his weekly radio audience.

His message was aimed at convincing voters that the U.S. economy, which has been considered a drag on his re-election bid, now might prove otherwise.

The department reported that unemployment fell last month in 11 of 17 battleground states that could decide the presidential election. Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin showed the biggest declines.

"This week brought further evidence that across America, more citizens are finding jobs ... and these figures show that America's jobs engine is running strong," Bush said, rattling off the report's findings.

"Nationally, we gained

Bob Thompson, Sr. O & M Technician for Florida Gas Transmission Company walks past the gas scrubber at Compressor Station 27, in Thonotosassa, Fl. Thursday Feb. 19, 2004. The station built in 2003 on the "west leg" of the pipeline, is part of the approximately 5,000-mile line that extends from south Texas to south Florida.

G-8 ministers urge boost in oil exports

NEW YORK (AP)—Concerned that soaring oil prices will undermine global economic growth, finance ministers from the Group of Eight leading industrial nations on Sunday urged oil-exporting countries to boost production.

G-8 finance ministers issued a statement after a two-day meeting declaring that "lower oil prices would benefit the world economy."

In an apparent reference to Saudi Arabia's offer Friday to boost crude production in June, the communique said, "we welcome the recent announcement by some oil producers to increase production."

"We now call on all oil

producers to provide adequate supplies to ensure that world oil prices return to levels consistent with lasting global economic prosperity and stability," the statement said.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which had decided in March to cut its official output, has come under growing pressure from the United States and other consuming nations to boost production as oil prices rose above \$40 a barrel in recent weeks.

On Friday, oil prices fell after Saudi Arabia pledged to pump an additional 600,000 barrels a day starting in June, lifting its total daily output to 9.1 million barrels.

On Sunday, Saudi Arabia went even further, offering assurances that it will supply up to 2 million barrels a day in additional crude oil to its full capacity of 10.5 million barrels there is sufficient market demand, U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said in Amsterdam, Netherlands, after meeting privately with Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi.

The G-8 ministers—representing United States, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada—were meeting in New York to finalize the economic portion of the agenda for the group's summit on June 8-10 in Sea Island, Ga.

Will gas, energy prices hurt the economy?

WASHINGTON (AP)—Consumers and businesses are feeling the pinch from record-high energy prices. Already there are worries the country could fall into recession if \$2 per gallon gas keeps going up.

Oil price shocks have played a role in four of the last five U.S. recessions over the past three decades. Analysts fear that attacks on oil facilities in Iraq and Saudi Arabia and the threat of further disruptions will keep prices volatile for some time.

"It could cause a recession if oil prices go high enough," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York.

The price of light crude oil hit a record of \$41.85 in New York trading early last week before settling at \$39.93 on Friday. The markets reacted to the announcement that Saudi Arabia will begin pumping an additional 500,000 barrels of crude

per day beginning in June.

That decision will have little immediate effect on pump prices in the United States, analysts said. The additional supplies will not reach this country until mid-July, after the demand for refineries to produce gasoline for the peak driving season has ended.

In another development Sunday, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said the Saudis had promised to raise their daily production by 2 million barrels, to 9.1 million. Also, Abraham said in a news conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands, that Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi told him in a private meeting the kingdom was willing eventually to "meet all requests up to their full capacity of 10.5 million barrels a day."

Higher energy prices will crimp consumer spending. They act like a tax: If people pay more to fill up their cars, they have less to spend on other things.

The burden is not felt by just drivers of gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles.

Taxicab riders in the nation's capital and elsewhere are stuck paying fuel surcharges. Airlines are raising ticket prices to cope with the higher cost of jet fuel. Trucking companies are boosting delivery prices.

Energy-intensive industries such as chemical and paper manufacturers have begun to increase prices to cover higher production costs. Even the local lawn service is having to shell out more to keep its mowers and trucks moving.

Crude oil prices have risen by about \$10 per barrel since late last year. If that increase were to be sustained for a year, it would shave about \$50 billion from consumer spending and reduce overall economic growth by about one-half of percentage point in 2005.

STOCKS	
ASIAN MARKETS	
Japan Nikkei	10,886.73 +29.10
Hong Kong Hang Seng	19,120.08 +15.50
S. Korea KOSPI	1,060.65 +4.57
MONEY MARKET	
Federal Fund	1.00
Bank Rate	1.00
Consumer Price	1.00
Gold	1.00
Treasury Bills	1.00
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WORLD	
U.S. Non-Farm Payrolls	1.00
U.S. Jobless Rate	1.00
U.S. Personal Income	1.00
U.S. Personal Spending	1.00
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U.S. Retail Sales	1.00
U.S. Consumer Confidence	1.00
U.S. Durable Goods Orders	1.00
U.S. Housing Starts	1.00
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Asia

Kashmir bus explosion kills 33, hurts 10

By MUJTABA ALI AHMAD
AP WRITER

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—A bomb struck a bus carrying vacationing soldiers and their families on Sunday, killing 33 people and wounding 10 in Indian-controlled Kashmir, officials said, just a day after the new Indian prime minister was sworn in.

The attack by suspected Islamic separatists, one of the worst in recent history, was a bloody initiation for newly installed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who has pledged to make the Kashmir crisis and relations with rival Pakistan main priorities of his minority government.

Singh condemned the attack. It wasn't clear whether the bombing was timed to coincide with his announcement of his Cabinet lineup, expected later Sunday.

The attack was "yet another indication that terrorism continues to pose a grave threat to our nation's integrity and progress," Singh said in a statement.

"While we continue to seek peaceful resolutions to all outstanding problems, there can be

no compromise on our solemn resolve to deal with the menace of terrorism with firm determination," he said.

The powerful explosion on the road connecting Srinagar and Jammu in India's Jammu-Kashmir state occurred when a Border Security Force convoy was passing by, said Neeraj Sharma, a spokesman for the paramilitary force.

The victims included border forces and their family members, Sharma said.

About 40 people were on the bus. Several of the wounded died in hospitals, and by Sunday evening, the fatalities included 18 soldiers, six women, five male relatives and four children as authorities revised the death toll.

"The bodies were charred beyond recognition, so it took time to identify them. It became difficult to even identify our own soldiers," said K. Srinivasan, the deputy inspector-general of the BSF in the region.

The remote-controlled bomb was planted under a small bridge near the village of Lower Munda, 55 miles south of Srinagar, Jammu-Kashmir's summer capital, Sharma said. As the



AP

Soldiers stand guard as the remains of a bus destroyed in an explosion is removed from the site at Lower Munda, about 90 kilometers south of Srinagar, India, Sunday, May 23, 2004.

bomb went off, the fuel tank of the bus caught fire, he said. Srinivasan blamed the attack on separatist Islamic guerrillas.

A police officer said a civilian

vehicle also was hit by the blast and three people traveling in it were wounded.

Military helicopters rushed to the area to evacuate the victims

and traffic was halted on the Jammu-Srinagar highway—the only road that links Kashmir with the rest of the country.

The Hezb-ul Mujahideen mili-

tant group claimed responsibility for the attack in telephone calls to some Indian media outlets, but the unidentified caller did not give any reason for the attack.

RP Congress starts presidential vote count

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine police braced for possible protests that could disrupt this week's count by Congress of ballots cast during the May 10 presidential elections.

Leading opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. has already claimed victory, and warned of a "people power" revolt if he's not announced as the Philippines' new leader.

Anti-riot police were being deployed Sunday around the Congress building in suburban

Quezon City, where a 14-member canvassing committee will start to count votes on Tuesday in the May 10 elections.

Any protesters who attempt to rally without a permit or block road traffic will be dispersed, national police spokesman Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao said Sunday.

"We have been planning for worst-case scenarios," Goltiao told radio station DZBB.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo leads Poe by more than

730,000 votes in a government-sanctioned, but unofficial, "quick count" by an elections watchdog. It has tallied about 50 percent of more than 216,000 election precincts.

Poe, however, said he won the presidency based on an opposition-supported count, despite alleged voting fraud by Arroyo's camp.

House of Representatives Speaker Jose de Venecia said he expected the counting to be completed in one to three weeks,

well ahead of a scheduled June 30 presidential inauguration.

However, Venecia said lawyers could stall the process by questioning the legality of the vote count in several provinces where the opposition has claimed massive cheating took place.

Poe's aides said they have gathered evidence of electoral fraud. Arroyo's team has urged the opposition to file complaints, but warned against fomenting violence.

Report: US reiterates one-China support

China assails Taiwan leader over demands

BEIJING (AP)—China on Monday rebuked Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian, saying he showed no sincerity in his inauguration speech about improving relations with Beijing.

The remarks by the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office were the first response by China to Chen's speech and set a confrontational tone for the beginning of his second term.

Office spokesman Zhang Mingqing China faulted the Taiwanese president for refusing to concede that Taiwan was a part of the Chinese nation—the position China has laid down as its basic demand for improving ties.

"Chen Shui-bian has shown no sincerity to improve relations," Zhang said. "If he has sincerity to improve relations, he must acknowledge that Taiwan and China together make up a single country," Zhang said.

Zhang referred repeatedly to China's threat to use force to unify with the island it claims as its sovereign territory, saying China would "pay any price" to safeguard its territory.

BEIJING (AP)—Washington reiterated its support for Beijing's "one-China" Taiwan policy on Sunday, according to a news report that came days after the island's president—fiercely criticized on the mainland pushing for independence—was sworn in for his second term.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell made the comments in a telephone conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

"The U.S. side reiterated that it would abide by the one-China policy," Xinhua said.

The two sides also spoke about Iraq and other issues, Xinhua said without elaborating.

China and Taiwan split during civil war in 1949, but Beijing claims the island as part of its territory and has threatened to attack if it declares independence or delays talks on unification.

Although the United States cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1979, it is the island's biggest military arms supplier and is bound by law to help it defend itself.

The close U.S.-Taiwan ties have been a constant irritant in China's relations with Washington, which routinely reassures Beijing that it supports the mainland's one-China policy on Taiwan.

In his first term, Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian showed no signs that he shared the mainland's goal of unification, earning harsh criticism from the Communist leadership.

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N. Korea's role in nuke market questioned

By GEORGE JAHN
AP WRITER

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—North Korea has emerged as a possible supplier in the clandestine nuclear network, with diplomats on Sunday saying the communist country was the likely source of nearly two tons of uranium that Libya bought for its now-scraped weapons program.

The revelations stoked concern that Iran and other nations also could have benefited from cooperation with the secretive nation to get fuel, components and the knowledge needed to build nuclear weapons.

Previously, Pakistan—the key country implicated in a worldwide nuclear black market—had been thought to be the source of 1.87 tons of uranium hexafluoride that Libya handed over to Americans in January as part of its decision to get rid of weapons of mass destruction.

Now, the evidence increasingly points

to North Korea, the diplomats said, though they cautioned that the investigation was not yet complete and other sources for Libya's program could not be ruled out. The diplomats spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The new evidence pointing to North Korea came from the International Atomic Energy Agency and was based on interviews with members of the clandestine network headed by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist implicated in selling his country's nuclear secrets to Libya, North Korea, Iran, and possibly other countries, according to one diplomat.

A U.S. official, however, told AP that U.S. intelligence was "still pursuing" the alleged North Korean link "to see how much truth there is to it" and needed more information to "disprove" Pakistan as the source.

One major proliferation concern is Iran, whose nuclear program already is under scrutiny because of fears it might



Kim

be developing weapons.

Iran's activities are up for review next month when the International Atomic Energy Agency's board meets to discuss the state of investigations into programs that go back nearly two

decades and include covert attempts to enrich uranium, reprocessing small amounts of plutonium and other suspect activities with possible weapons applications.

Inspections last year by the Vienna-based IAEA showed that Iran failed to report imports in 1991 of large amounts of uranium hexafluoride—the same substance shipped to Libya, apparently by North Korea.

While the origin of the Iran shipments was China, other channels of weapons cooperation between the communist North and the Islamic regime appear to exist at least since the early 1980s, when North Korea sold about 100 refitted Soviet Scud B missiles to Tehran, which used them in its war against Iraq.

More recently, Japanese media quoted unidentified military officials as saying North Korea and Iran had agreed on joint production of long-range ballistic missiles. One of the

diplomats who spoke to AP on Sunday cited intelligence saying that North Korean officials were believed to have visited Tehran last year, possibly in connection with such a deal.

Pirouz Hosseini, Iran's chief delegate to the IAEA, said he was "not aware of such cooperation at all," between his country and North Korea.

"These are just intelligence reports," he told AP.

One of the diplomats said as far as he knew the IAEA report up for review in June would not link North Korea to Iran's nuclear programs.

But another said that with other countries, notably Pakistan, now established as supplying both Libya and Iran with centrifuges for uranium enrichment, further investigations could also well connect North Korea to Tehran, considering the "interlinkage between suppliers and recipients that runs through the investigations into the (nuclear) black market."

Koizumi faces criticism after summit

TOKYO (AP)—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi faced a torrent of criticism Sunday that he had rewarded North Korea with millions of dollars in aid without making any headway on the nuclear weapons dispute or fully resolving the North's abductions of Japanese citizens.

At a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il Saturday, Koizumi broke a two-year stalemate to win the release of five children of Japanese citizens who were kidnapped by Northern agents decades ago.

But the families' emotional reunions brought little applause for the Japanese leader.

"It is extremely questionable whether Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's latest visit to North Korea made any progress," the Yomiuri Shimbun, a major newspaper, said in an editorial Sunday. "The latest meeting made no headway in resolving the abduction, nuclear, missile or any other issues related to Northeast Asia's peace and security."

Koizumi acknowledged his trip had fallen short of some expectations: no significant breakthrough was made on North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and no date was set for resuming talks toward establishing formal diplomatic relations.

He insisted his pledge of 250,000 tons of food aid and US\$10 million worth of medical supplies to North Korea was made at the request of international organizations and not in exchange for the family members' release.

Some said that was too generous.

"He was unable to get a clear pledge from General Secretary Kim to dismantle his nuclear program," said the newspaper Mainichi Shimbun. "Doubts remain whether it was in fact a reward for the families' return."

The five children, meanwhile, began a new life in Japan.

Relatives said the children were confused by their new surroundings.

"They asked why they were here when they still have so many friends in North Korea," said Toru Hasuike, an uncle of two of the children.

He also said the children—who wore North Korean pins on their jackets just as their parents did in October 2002 after 24 years in the communist country—expressed shock at being allowed to drink the same type of juice as the prime minister after meeting Koizumi.

The families prepared Sunday to leave Tokyo to take the children to their new homes, where they will adopt Japanese names and begin learning the language.

Afghan peacekeepers attacked, 2 casualties

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Militants fired rockets at a peacekeeping vehicle in the Afghan capital Sunday, causing two casualties, a spokesman said. He would not say if the victims were killed or wounded.

Three rockets were fired shortly before 9:00 p.m. near the Jalalabad Road, a main route into Kabul from the east where the International Security Assistance Force has several bases, said Lt. Richard Scarth, a spokesman for the NATO-led force.

"We understand that there have been two ISAF casualties and we're investigating," British Lt. Richard Scarth said.

Asked if the two victims were dead or injured, Scarth declined to elaborate.

A Western official in Kabul, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a Norwegian vehicle was hit in the attack, but declined to comment on the extent of any injuries.

British peacekeepers sealed off the

road, preventing reporters from visiting the scene where senior Afghan police officials were investigating. A helicopter could be heard circling overhead.

Officials from the U.S. military, which has its headquarters in Kabul and a base on the Jalalabad Road, had no immediate information.

Two soldiers from the international force were killed while out on patrol in back-to-back suicide bombings in January, one of them a British soldier on the Jalalabad Road.

While the capital has been relatively peaceful, commanders of the 6,000-strong peacekeeping force, which is separate from the 20,000 mainly U.S. troops pursuing Taliban-led militants, have said they remained on guard against possible attacks.

Several homemade bombs also have been discovered on the road this year, and the peacekeepers bases also come under occasional rocket fire.



WATERY GRAVE

A diver conducts rescue operations near a capsized ferry in the Meghna River near the town of Chandpur, about 40 miles southeast of Dhaka, Bangladesh, Sunday, May 23, 2004. A river ferry carrying about 250 passengers capsized early Sunday during a tropical storm in southwestern Bangladesh and many were feared dead, police said.

China scientists testing SARS vaccine

By AUDRA ANG
AP WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese scientists have begun testing a SARS vaccine on four volunteers at a Beijing hospital, state media said Sunday, in what appears to be the first such experiment on humans.

The volunteers, all in their 20s, were injected with the vaccine on Saturday at the Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital under tight security, reported the Beijing Youth Daily and the Guangzhou Daily, two of China's largest newspapers.

A hospital official, contacted Sunday, said she could not confirm that the tests took place.

Roy Wadia, a Beijing-based spokes-

man for the World Health Organization, said he believed China is the first to get to the human testing stage.

"China is on the fast track," Wadia said. "But we aren't concerned about who is first or second or third. We're concerned about the safety process."

"Of course it's always better to develop a vaccine as early as possible ... but don't sacrifice safety for the sake of expediency and speed," he said.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, first emerged in the southern province of Guangdong in late 2002. It killed 774 people worldwide and sickened more than 8,000 before abating in July 2003.

A SARS vaccine has been successfully tested in the United States on animals, but health authorities, including WHO, say a

safe and effective vaccine for humans is at least a year or two away.

The Chinese vaccine was jointly developed by the Ministry of Science and Technology and a local company, the Guangzhou Daily newspaper said.

The company, affiliated with Beijing's prestigious Peking University, has already produced "several thousand vaccine samples for clinical tests," the newspaper said. No other details were given about the company.

In January, China announced it had approved human testing for an experimental SARS vaccine.

The government said then it planned to inject volunteers with a vaccine made from a dead sample of the virus that scientists say causes SARS. It said tests on animals have shown it to be effective.

World

5,500 Iraqis killed, morgue records show

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—More than 5,500 Iraqis died violently in just Baghdad and three provinces in the first 12 months of the occupation, an Associated Press survey found. The toll from both criminal and political violence ran dramatically higher than violent deaths before the war, according to statistics from morgues.

There are no reliable figures for places like Fallujah and Najaf that have seen surges in fighting since early April.

Indeed, there is no precise count for Iraq as a whole on how many people have been killed, nor is there a breakdown of deaths caused by the different sorts of attacks. The U.S. military, the occupation authority

and Iraqi government agencies say they don't have the ability to track civilian deaths.

But the AP survey of morgues in Baghdad and the provinces of Karbala, Kirkuk and Tikrit found 5,558 violent deaths recorded from May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared an end to major combat operations, to April 30. Officials at morgues for three more of Iraq's 18 provinces either didn't have numbers or declined to release them.

The AP's survey was not a comprehensive compilation of the nationwide death toll, but was a sampling intended to assess the levels of violence. Figures for violent deaths in the months before the war showed a far lower rate.

That doesn't mean Iraq is a

more dangerous place than during Saddam Hussein's regime. At least 300,000 people were murdered by security forces and buried in mass graves during the dictator's 23-year rule, U.S. officials say, and human rights workers put the number closer to 500,000.

"We cannot compare the situation now with how it was before," Nouri Jaber al-Nouri, inspector general of the Interior Ministry, said recently. "Iraqis used to fear everything. ... But now, despite all that is happening, we feel safe."

Still, the morgue figures, which exclude trauma deaths from accidents like car wrecks and falls, highlight the insecurity Iraqis feel from the high



AP

Iraqi girl Kholood, 2, sits on a bed in the hospital in Ramadi, 110 km west of Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday May 23, 2004. Kholood was injured by shrapnel into her back when U.S. helicopters fired on a wedding party in the remote desert near the border with Syria, killing more than 40 people, Wednesday May 19.

AP: Video shows Iraq wedding celebration

RAMADI, Iraq (AP)—A videotape obtained Sunday by Associated Press Television News captures a wedding party that survivors say was later attacked by U.S. planes early Wednesday, killing up to 45 people. The dead included the cameraman, Yasser Shawkat Abdullah, hired to record the festivities, which ended Tuesday night before the planes struck.

The U.S. military says it is investigating the attack, which took place in the village of Mogr el-Deeb about five miles from the Syrian border, but that all evidence so far indicates the target was a safehouse for foreign fighters.

"There was no evidence of a wedding: no decorations, no musical instruments found, no large quantities of food or leftover servings one would expect from a wedding celebration," Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said Saturday. "There may have been some kind

of celebration. Bad people have celebrations, too."

But video that APTN shot a day after the attack shows fragments of musical instruments, pots and pans and brightly colored beddings used for celebrations, scattered around the bombed out tent.

The wedding videotape shows a dozen white pickup trucks speeding through the desert escorting the bridal car—decorated with colorful ribbons. The bride wears a Western-style white bridal dress and veil. The camera captures her stepping out of the car but does not show a close-up.

Reporter and photographer, who interviewed more than a dozen survivors a day after the bombing, were able to identify many of them on the wedding party video—which runs for several hours.

APTN also traveled to Mogr el-Deeb, 250 miles west of Ramadi, the day after the attack to

film what the survivors said was the wedding site. A devastated building and remnants of the tent, pots and pans could be seen, along with bits of what appeared to be the remnants of ordnance, one of which bore the marking "ATU-35," similar to those on U.S. bombs.

A water tanker truck can be seen in both the video shot by APTN and the wedding tape obtained from a cousin of the groom.

The singing and dancing seems to go on forever at the all-male tent set up in the garden of the host, Rikad Nayef, for the wedding of his son, Azhad, and the bride Rutbah Sabah. The men later move to the porch when darkness falls, apparently taking advantage of the cool night weather. Children, mainly boys, sit on their fathers' laps; men smoke an Arab water pipe, finger worry beads and chat with one another. It looks like a typical, gender-segregated tribal desert wedding.

Forces raid Iraq mosque, kill 32 fighters

KUFA, Iraq (AP)—U.S. and Iraqi forces raided a Kufa mosque Sunday where they said insurgents stored weapons, and the military said at least 32 fighters loyal to a radical Shiite cleric were killed during the first American incursion into the holy city.

U.S. troops also clashed with militiamen loyal to cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in a Shiite district of Baghdad and in Najaf, the twin city of Kufa. Nine U.S. soldiers were wounded Sunday around Baghdad, the military said, including four injured in a mortar attack in the east of the capital.

In another holy city, Karbala, militia fighters appeared to

have abandoned their positions after weeks of combat.

A U.S. Marine was killed in a car bombing near Falujah, a center of the separate Sunni Muslim insurgency in the central and northern areas of the country.

American tanks and troops moved into the heart of Kufa, a stronghold of al-Sadr, for the first time since the fiercely anti-U.S. cleric launched an uprising against the coalition early last month. Al-Sadr, sought for the April 2003 killing of a moderate rival cleric, has taken refuge in Najaf and routinely delivers a Friday sermon in Kufa.

U.S. soldiers fought militia-

men near Kufa's Sahla mosque and then raided it for weapons after an Iraqi counterterrorism force "cleared" the site, the military said. Soldiers seized a machine gun, two mortar tubes and more than 200 mortar rounds, along with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and rounds, according to a statement.

American troops smashed the gate to the mosque complex with an armored vehicle and killed people inside, mosque employee Radhi Mohammed said. An Associated Press photographer saw bloodstains on the ground indicating that someone was dragged for at least 10 yards. There also was blood in mosque bathrooms.

"Now there are few controls. There is crime, revenge killings, so much violence."

The figure does not include most people killed in big terrorist bombings, Hassan said. The cause of death in such cases is obvious so bodies are usually not taken to the morgue, but given directly to victims' families.

cuc006

Paris airport terminal collapses, 5 dead

By JOCELYN GECKER
AP WRITER

ROISSY, France (AP)—The vaulted roof of the new, showcase terminal at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport—tout-ed as a jewel of design, safety and comfort—collapsed early Sunday, killing at least five people and forcing authorities to revisit problems that preceded the fanfare opening of Terminal 2E less than a year ago.

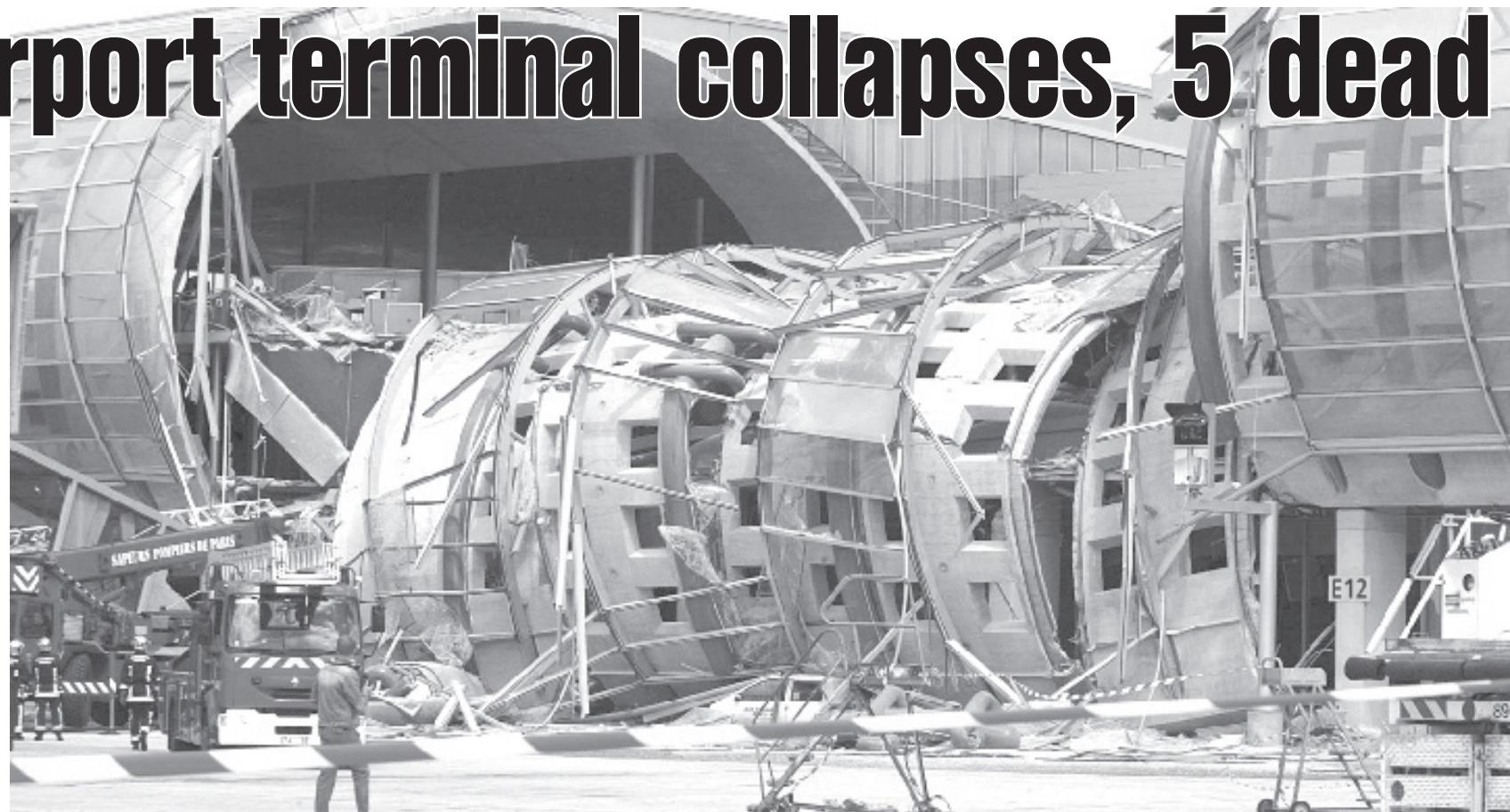
There were some cracking sounds and some dust, and then tons of concrete, steel and glass came crashing down on a waiting area inside the gleaming terminal. The 98-foot section of roof fell just before 7 a.m. as passengers were starting to arrive.

Officials said there was no sign a terror attack caused the collapse. Of those confirmed dead, one was Chinese and the other four also were apparently foreigners, said Michel Clerel, chief doctor of Aeroports de Paris, which runs the airport.

Rescue workers sent dogs to sniff for victims buried under the pile of twisted steel, boulders of concrete and shattered glass. Officials said there might also be a sixth person killed, and that the victims were probably passengers.

The chief doctor also said three people were injured—all of them police called to the scene when signs of trouble appeared.

"Witnesses heard a cracking and noticed cracks in the ceiling and saw dust falling," said Pierre Graff, president of Aeroports de Paris. "They, of



Firefighters inspect the debris of the 2E passenger terminal after a section of the roof collapsed at Charles de Gaulle airport in Roissy, north of Paris, Sunday.

AP

course, ran away. Police arrived and began evacuating people."

Within about two to three minutes, the roof collapsed, said Rene Brun, director of Charles de Gaulle.

An Air France flight had arrived from Newark, N.J., just ahead of the collapse and another from Johannesburg, South Africa. A third plane was taking off for Prague. Michel Sappin, prefect for the Seine-Saint-Denis region, where Roissy is located north of Paris, said there was only a moderate

number of passengers in the terminal at the early hour.

"It looks pretty bad out there," said Amy Haight, 30, arriving later from Houston with her husband, Nelson, for a friend's wedding. She said she saw the collapsed building and dozens of rescue vehicles as her plane landed. "It's so sad, it's so scary. My God, we're so lucky."

The futuristic, cylindrical terminal sits on pylons, and when the roof fell it pulled down outer walls and crashed

through a boarding ramp onto several parked cars below.

President Jacques Chirac asked that investigators quickly determine the cause of the collapse. Two separate probes were being opened. Transport Minister Gilles de Robien said there was nothing to indicate a terrorist attack.

The terminal, a tunnel-shaped construction that is hundreds of yards long, was evacuated and immediately shut down, delaying scores of flights. The terminal mainly serves Air France.

"The consequences are obviously grave for us since we have to manage the movement of planes with one less terminal, grave in terms of image since this was our showcase jewel," said Pierre Graff, president of Aeroports de Paris, which runs Paris' airports.

The tragedy comes as France braces for the influx of summer tourists.

The \$890 million terminal, with slots for 17 aircraft, opened to the public last June 25 after at least two construction delays.

Colombia disco blast kills 6, injures 82

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—A bomb planted by suspected rebels exploded in a crowded discotheque in northwest Colombia, killing at least six people and wounding 82—the bloodiest in a series of attacks marking the 40th anniversary of Colombia's main rebel group.

Another bomb blew up early Sunday at a pool hall in the Caribbean port city of Cartagena, killing one person and wounding three. It was not immediately clear who was behind that attack.

At least 13 people have been killed and more than 100 wounded since the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, began its wave of attacks Thursday, apparently to mark the 40th anniversary of its founding this week.

A 4-year-old girl was among those killed when the bomb, packed in a small suitcase and planted in a bathroom, exploded in the discotheque shortly before midnight Saturday. The attack occurred in Apartado, 280 miles northwest of Bogota, in Antioquia state.

Antioquia state Lieutenant Gov. Jorge Mejia told The Associated Press the attack bore the hallmarks of the FARC. Authorities arrested a suspect shortly after the bombing with a hand grenade in his possession, Mejia said.

Mejia said seven people died in the blast, while Gen. Faucelino Latorre, the military chief in the region, said a total of six died.

Twenty-five of the injured are in serious or critical condition and have been flown to hospitals in Medellin,

Colombia's second-largest city.

Until a decade ago, Apartado—located in Colombia's sweltering banana-producing region near the Panamanian border—was under the control of the FARC and a smaller rebel group. But the Colombian Army, along with right-wing paramilitary forces, took control over the region in 1994. Officials said Apartado has been relatively peaceful recently.

"The violence we had forgotten in Apartado ... came back for a visit today," said Apartado Mayor Fidel Banguero.

Colombian army troops, meanwhile, killed a FARC militia leader Sunday in a firefight near the city of Florencia, near a rebel stronghold in southern Colombia, the army said.

Oxfam: Sudan faces humanitarian disaster

LONDON (AP)—The suffering people of war-ravaged western Sudan need the help of their government and the international community if a humanitarian disaster is to be averted, the aid agency Oxfam said Monday.

Oxfam warned that thousands of people in the troubled region of Darfur face disease and starvation over the next three months as food and fresh water supplies run dangerously low.

Sudan announced Friday that it had eased restrictions on humanitarian groups trying to assist in Darfur, where more than a year of fighting has displaced almost 1 million people.

As a result of Sudan's decision, an extra 15 expert Oxfam workers would be heading to the region, Oxfam re-

gional director Caroline Nursey said in a statement issued by the charity.

"I hope this new move will mean that our water engineers can finally get to the Darfur region and to remote communities where people need urgent help," she said.

"However, access must be sustained over the next three months and beyond if we are to significantly improve the health of thousands of displaced people and prevent outbreaks of disease."

"This crisis is bigger than any one agency can cope with and the international community and the government of Sudan need to work together to end civilian suffering," Nursey said.

Thousands of people are believed

to have died since early 2003 when rebels began fighting for autonomy and greater state aid. The conflict has displaced about 900,000 refugees in Darfur's three states, and an additional 100,000 have fled into Chad.

Aid agencies have accused the Arab-dominated Sudan government of providing support to Arab militiamen waging a campaign of ethnic cleansing against African tribes. Sudan's President Omar el-Bashir has denied the claims.

The Islamic government in Khartoum has been fighting Christians and animists in the southern Sudan for more than two decades, a war in which at least 2 million people are estimated to have died.

Israeli leader's WWII analogy draws fire

JERUSALEM (AP)—Causing an uproar, an Israeli Cabinet minister and Holocaust survivor said Sunday that Israel's offensive in a Gaza refugee camp—including TV images of displaced Palestinians searching the rubble for their meager belongings—brought back memories of his family's suffering.

The comments by Justice Minister Yosef Lapid reflected a growing debate in Israel over the justification for a campaign that has left 41 Palestinians dead, turned dozens of homes to dust, drawn international condemnation and yielded just one arms-smuggling tunnel.

Afterward, Lapid insisted he was not likening army actions to Nazi policies but was simply moved to remember his grandmother, who was killed by the Nazis. "If I wanted to say Holocaust, I would have said Holocaust," Lapid told the radio.

But Cabinet colleagues were infuriated, saying that the analogy was clear.

"The comparison, maybe hinted or even unintentional, between the systematic murder of the Jews by the Germans and the army's operations in Gaza ... is not a legitimate analogy," Health Minister Dan Naveh told Army Radio.

The army says the six-day-old offensive—the biggest in Gaza in years—is crucial for stopping weapons smuggling between Egypt and Gaza's Rafah refugee camp. With all



other access to Gaza sealed, tunnels are the only way to bring in weapons, including rockets the army says could hit Israeli towns.

Some critics said the offensive makes little sense from a military standpoint, however. Others questioned why Prime Minister Ariel Sharon approved it even though he is pushing for an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

The outrage has focused on home demolitions in Rafah, most along an Israeli military buffer zone between Egypt and the camp. Since the outbreak of fighting in 2000, more than 11,000 Palestinians have been displaced by house demolitions along the road, part of the military's attempt to widen it.

The army now says it wants to widen the road even further, to 300 yards along the six-mile route to make it harder to dig tunnels.

Ninety tunnels have been found and destroyed since the violence began more than three years ago, according to the Israeli military, though only one has been discovered during the offensive that began Tuesday.

Military sources confirmed Sunday that the plan would require the demolition of some 700 to 2,000 Palestinian homes. Israel's attorney general has vetoed the idea, saying it would not hold up in local or international courts, and told the army to come up with a less destructive plan.

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Life & Style

Dunst is shaping her own character

By RACHEL ABRAMOWITZ
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Kirsten Dunst is languid. In the heat of the spring afternoon, the 22-year-old actress has melted into the couch in the lobby of the Chateau Marmont hotel.

She sometimes comes here with her girlfriends and hangs out by the pool. "It feels like a little vacation," says Dunst, from the side of her mouth. She's chewing fiercely on the straw of her iced coffee. Her milk-fed blondness, which she's mined for both comedy and pathos, seems more irregular and slightly impish now that she's freed from the dictates of costume and makeup. She's wearing faded blue shorts and a loose white T-shirt, her black-rooted hair twirled about in an odd hairdo, a transitional growing-out coif that comes with lots of hairpins and a tiny sprite of a ponytail.

Vacation is something Dunst speaks of longingly as she rides the "Spider-Man 2" marketing juggernaut, a whirl of activity that will encompass many countries on many continents, multiple magazine covers, a multi-day Mario Testino "Vogue" shoot ("All of his assistants are gorgeous. It's so intimidating to be around, being photographed and being watched by these gorgeous guys") and a stint on "Oprah." "I did it once before, and that lighting is not geared to me. That's for sure," she says with a giggle. "I look so funny. Little squinty eyes and this huge lug of hair."

Dunst doesn't have the perma-press emotionality of

someone who's been in the Hollywood spin cycle too long, with every feeling processed and reprocessed and trotted out for public consumption. It's a small miracle, given that she's been working since the age of 3, appearing in 70-odd commercials before graduating to such films as "Interview With the Vampire," "Bring It On" and the recently released "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

She admits she can get too candid—an endearing quality that gets her in trouble sometimes. "I have to write 'I'm sorry' letters," she says with mock dolefulness.

Today she mostly uses her eyes for effect—opening them wide in a wacky, conspiratorial way when she wants to suggest, without actually saying, that a certain movie isn't all it's cracked up to be. She maintains an air of truth amid complete deniability.

"Spider-Man 2" isn't one of the movies that gets the eye treatment—in part because she's had a hand in shaping her screen alter ego, Mary Jane Watson.

Dunst anchors "Spider-Man" in a world of murky emotion, playing an object of adoration that somehow transcends that status.

"I'm sick of playing stupid girlfriend roles, and I'm not going to do that anymore," she says, although she pointedly adds that Mary Jane is not just a girlfriend part.

Mary Jane is a vital role. The love story is the most important part of "Spider-Man," and in this movie it even affects his powers and everything he does even more," she explains. At the end of the first film, Mary Jane de-

clares her love to the boy-man Peter Parker/Spider-Man, who can't reciprocate. The second one picks up on this dilemma. "Mary Jane has grown up a lot, but Pete has stayed pretty juvenile in his social relationships with Mary Jane. He's not there for her at all because he has this other thing." Magic powers and stuff.

Dunst says making the second film felt very different—mostly because she felt different. "All the hoopla around (the movie business) I used to buy into a lot more. I used to be excited about hanging out on the set. I like my life better than hanging out on the set. I love what I do, but I just want to go to work and come home to my life and not have it cross over in any way." Having a life outside of the business seems to be a big theme for Dunst.

"What I have a problem with is that all the things in my life were for a lot of years geared toward work," she explains.

She looks back on all those years when her artist mother dragged her to commercial auditions in New York City with more cockeyed wonder than resentment. "I was just playing and having fun. I was making my mom happy. When a kid makes other people happy, you think it's love. Everything is so great. I liked performing for people." Her tone begins to change. "Probably it's not really good that a young kid likes performing for everybody. They just want love and attention somewhere. It's kind of weird."

Her mother shielded her from rejections, but that was harder to do as she got into the double dig-



THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Kirsten Dunst says of her character, Mary Jane, in "Spider-Man 2," "I wanted her to be a thinker and very decisive."

its. "I auditioned for the 'Secret Garden' movie. When I didn't get that I was sobbing on the floor," she recalls. "When other people want something for you so badly and you're young you want it so badly too. I was crying because you feel like you've let your mom down. It's really messed up, when you think about it."

Dunst still loves her mom, although by the time she was 19 she began picking her own parts, guided mostly by intuition and, as she says, "director, director, director." Up next, she stars in Richard Loncraine's "Wimbledon," a kind of "A Star Is Born" set in the tennis world, and will soon be playing a flight attendant in the upcoming Cameron Crowe romantic comedy "Elizabethtown." To win the latter role, she had to audition for the first time in years. "My nerves were crazy," she says.

She also lives in her own brand-new house, with Gyllenhaal, their German shepherd

and not much furniture—although she tried unsuccessfully to persuade Chanel to sell her fabric to cover her couch.

As she becomes a superstar, she's keenly aware that there are more and more people eager to protect her from the vicissitudes of grown-up life. "I grew up in a lot of ways really early, but didn't at all in a lot of other ways," she says. "Now it's worse. You say you have a bloody nose, and 12 people get you a tissue," she says. She rolls her eyes for effect, then adopts the cadences of a self-deprecating Valley girl, if such an oxymoron were possible.

"I just have a bloody nose, guys."

Dunst likes her newly won maturity.

"I don't want to be a big baby," she says in her own voice. "I want to grow up and be an adult."

"They want to keep you childlike and ignorant in a lot of things."

'Harry Potter' stars and fans growing up

NEW YORK (AP)—The boy wizard of "Harry Potter" is growing up—and so are his fans, many of whom have replaced their old capes and wands with declarations of undying love.

Daniel Radcliffe appeared stunned by the enthusiastic reception he received Sunday from hundreds of shrieking fans who lined up outside the U.S. premiere of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."

"It's really amazing," the 14-year-old said, trembling a bit as he paused to wave at swooning teenage girls, some holding signs saying "Marry us, Dan!"

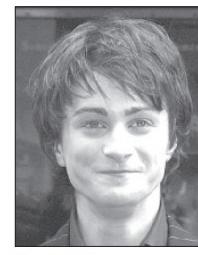
Even singer Rob Thomas of

matchbox twenty—himself no stranger to screaming women—was taken aback.

"When Harry Potter got out I think you could actually see his hair blow back from the screams," Thomas said. "They're very excited."

It was a happy development for Rupert Grint, who plays Harry's friend Ron Weasley at the Hogwarts school and arrived at the premiere looking distinctively adolescent with a shaggy mop-top haircut.

"It's quite cool," the 14-year-



Radcliffe

old said with a grin.

Audiences can expect a more mature film this time, too. The third installment of the "Harry

Potter" series takes a dark turn as the young sorcerer is sought by a murderous wizard who escapes from a prison for conjurers.

"It's more dark. A bit more edge of your seat," said 16-year-old Tom Felton, who plays Draco Malfoy in the film. "You might want to go with your mum."

Plenty of kids dragged their famous mums to the New York

premiere. Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins rushed past photographers with their kids, as did ABC's Meredith Vieira.

Model Christie Brinkley snapped pictures of her husband, children and nephew together on the red carpet. "My son and I read all the books together out loud, in all the accents," she said.

Fans lined up as early as 4 a.m., 12 hours before the start of the film, to angle for an autograph or glimpse of their favorite star.

"They're amazing!" 14-year-olds Danielle Lopez and Kristin Hauser shrieked in unison. The teens from upstate New York

arrived at 9 a.m. with a poster proclaiming "Every muggle deserves a hug." (That's Potter slang for non-wizards.)

Even Alan Rickman, 58, who plays sullen Hogwarts professor Severus Snape, was greeted by a marriage proposal from a somewhat older fan. "She must be desperate," he responded dryly.

As they grow into their roles as heartthrobs, the teenage "Harry Potter" stars are also giving performances with new depth, said Chris Columbus, who directed the first two "Harry Potter" movies and remained a producer on the third.

'Shrek 2' rakes in \$104.3M at box office

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It's a humongous "happily ever after" for "Shrek 2." The computer-animated fairy tale satire collected an estimated \$104.3 million at the weekend box office, the second-biggest three-day tally in movie history behind 2002's "Spider-Man," which took in \$114.8 million.

"Shrek 2" also scored the biggest opening ever for an animated film, easily topping "Finding Nemo's" \$70.2 million. "Shrek," which opened in 2001, earned \$42.3 million in its first weekend—but went on to collect \$267.6 million and win the first Oscar for an animated feature film.

For the sequel, the grumpy green ogre collected \$28.4 million on Friday, and then jumped a remarkable 58 percent Saturday to earn \$44.8 million, according to Jim Tharp, head of distribution for DreamWorks.

Saturday's earnings broke Hollywood's overall record for highest one-day earnings, also held by "Spider-Man" with \$43.6 million.

DreamWorks estimated the movie would earn an additional \$31 million on Sunday—but even rival studios suggested the take would be higher than that. Final figures will be released Monday.



Shrek (Mike Myers) can't take it anymore in Dreamworks' "Shrek 2."

Last week's No. 1 film, the Brad Pitt epic "Troy," fell to second place in its second weekend, earning \$23.8 million for a total of \$85.8 million. The movie cost a reported \$200 million to make.

Meanwhile, third-place "Van Helsing" crossed the \$100 million mark with weekend earnings of \$10.1 million, and "Mean Girls" ranked fourth with \$6.9 million.

"Shrek 2" was cutting into everybody else's audience," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations Co.

In the sequel, the title ogre (voiced by Mike Myers), his bride, Fiona (Cameron Diaz), and their pal Donkey (Eddie Murphy) visit Fiona's royal parents in the kingdom of Far, Far Away.

Critics loved the movie, which appealed to young kids with colorful characters, teenagers with comedy, couples with romance, and older audiences with a subplot about parents accepting the decisions of their grown-up children.

"Shrek 2," which opened Wednesday, screened in the largest number of opening theaters

ever—4,163 locations. It also brought in \$125.3 million over its first five days, breaking the record set by "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," which grossed \$124.1 million.

The sequel is a great victory for DreamWorks, which has occasionally struggled to find its footing in the animated movie market. The first "Shrek" was a success and the studio had a modest hit with 1998's computer-animated "Antz," but traditionally animated fare like "Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron," "The Road to El Dorado" and "Sinbad: Legend of the Seven

Seas" were all money-losers.

"For us, this is really more about proving that we have a creative rhythm as a company," said Ann Daly, head of animation for DreamWorks. "We found our tone and style."

About 60 percent of the audience was comprised of parents and their children, Tharp said. Studio exit polling found that 70 percent of respondents wanted to see the movie again, which bodes well for the movie's future in the competitive summer blockbuster season.

The weekend's total box-office earnings were up about 2 percent from last year, when "The Matrix Reloaded" and "Daddy Day Care" topped the list.

Estimated ticket sales for

Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "Shrek 2," \$104.3 million.
2. "Troy," \$23.8 million.
3. "Van Helsing," \$10.1 million.
4. "Mean Girls," \$6.9 million.
5. "Man on Fire," \$3.5 million.
6. "Breakin' All the Rules," \$2.8 million.
7. "13 Going on 30," \$2.5 million.
8. "New York Minute," \$1.1 million.
9. "Kill Bill - Vol. 2," \$1 million.
10. "Super Size Me," \$953,455.

DeGeneres rebounds after career slump

By LYNN ELBER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—If Ellen DeGeneres is carrying heavy baggage these days, it's only because she's stuffed it with Emmys. Crownning a successful first season for "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," DeGeneres accepted the best talk show trophy at Friday's Daytime Emmy Awards in New York.

The syndicated series also received three Emmys for technical achievement, making it this year's most-honored talk show.

Not bad for a woman who feared her career suffered permanent damage when she came out as a lesbian on "Ellen." All it took was a family-friendly hit movie ("Finding Nemo"), an HBO special and the daytime show to give DeGeneres back what she wanted—humor without agenda.

"I'm a comedian. I want to make people laugh," she said in a recent interview. "Somehow, I was viewed as political when I just want to be a comedian."

With her determinedly light-hearted show, DeGeneres is getting her wish. It's one of the handful of new daytime talk shows to score with audiences in the past decade.

Since fall 1995, television executives have launched 38 Monday-through-Friday talk shows in daytime, said Jim Paratore, president of Warner Bros. Telepictures Productions, which is producing DeGeneres' show.

Only "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" and "Dr. Phil" were hits,

Paratore said. Now he figures "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" can be added to the list.

It launched a year ago in TV markets covering 90 percent of the country, including NBC owned-and-operated stations, and wraps its first season Friday, although a few unaired shows will be scattered among the summer reruns.

Its total audience ratings are below that of blockbusters like top-rated Oprah Winfrey's talk show, but it draws a hefty slice of advertiser-coveted viewers.

"It's all about the demos," said Paratore, using industry slang referring to the show's largely 25-to-54-year-old demographic.

In negotiating the contract with a Cleveland station, for example, Paratore confidently predicted that 90 percent of viewers would be in that group. "You're out of your mind," the station executive replied.

But the numbers bore him out, Paratore said.

"The audience it reaches is the primo, upscale, soccer-mom target audience," he said, adding the show is a must-buy for many advertisers.

When the show begins its second season Sept. 6, there will be clear signs of its popularity: It will be upgraded in 38 of the top 100 markets, getting better time slots or airing on a network affiliate instead of an independent station.

Tom Selleck, who co-starred with DeGeneres in 1999's "The Love Letter" and was set to appear on her show Thursday, finds



DeGeneres

her success deserved. "She's a sweet person. You see the heart and soul of her," he said.

DeGeneres is enjoying the ride—a far tamer one than her last TV adventure.

In 1997, she and her sitcom character came out as lesbian on "Ellen." Before "Will & Grace," before "Queer as Folk," before "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," it fell to DeGeneres to serve as the TV focus for the issues of gay visibility and acceptability.

The sitcom lasted just one season more after a drop in ratings, and DeGeneres found her career in a slump. She tried resurrecting it with another sitcom, "The Ellen Show" in 2001, but it was short-lived.

Then came her endearing voice performance in 2003's "Finding Nemo," as a forgetful fish named Dory, and an HBO standup special in which she pointedly avoided politics in favor of the whimsical observational humor

that has marked her career.

But when Telepictures set out to sell her talk show, it found reluctance among some station owners and managers. "We knew there was baggage," Paratore said, and concerns over controversy had to be addressed.

"In daytime, the audience doesn't want to be preached at by anybody. They don't want Oprah preaching spirituality or Rosie preaching politics or Ellen preaching lifestyle," he said.

The station executives "needed to be shown that people would give me another chance," DeGeneres said. The message she delivered: "You don't know me, you know a perception of me" based on news reports.

She's grateful viewers have responded to her show, which combines the usual celebrity interviews with a monologue, comic bits and much interaction with her studio and at-home audience.

After DeGeneres displayed a picture of her overweight cat, "suddenly people sent in pictures of their fat cats," she said.

She continues on in her meandering, charmingly Ellenesque fashion: "Some of them we don't even show because I feel like, 'Oh, my God, this animal's going to blow up in a second.'"

Despite the career rough patch, she "wouldn't change one single thing that happened," DeGeneres said.

"I feel like the success is even sweeter. I'm so grateful I have another chance. I can relax, and not have any secrets."

wallace

Bride who had happy wedding didn't sweat the small stuff

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: After reading your column on how to ensure that bridesmaids' dresses match perfectly, I would like to offer a different perspective.

I married for the first time last June at age 47, and I did it on a very low budget. I would have paid for my bridesmaids' dresses had I been able to afford them, but it wasn't possible. My solution was to simply tell my closest friends to wear what they looked and felt good in—preferably something blue.

One friend could only afford to wear the mauve dress from her daughter's wedding, so I changed my color scheme to a "rainbow" wedding.

On my wedding day, my bridesmaids were more nervous than I was. So, after they helped me into my white gown and veil, I put on a white baseball cap, blew a whistle and gave the following pep talk: "OK, team. We've trained long and hard for this day, and it's here. There's tension and obstacles, but let me ask you -- have we got the heart? (Yes!) The desire? (Yes!) Are we in this together? (Yes!) Then what're we gonna do? Win! Win! Win! Yea, team!"

I didn't care if things matched perfectly. What mattered was these were the people I cared about the most, people who had a special place on our special day and enjoyed themselves. And do you know what? Everyone looked fabulous! If I was outshined, that was OK. I still had the husband, bless his patient, enduring soul.

A lot of our guests said it was one of the best weddings and receptions they had ever been to. So things weren't exact -- big deal!

IMPERFECT BUT HAPPY BRIDE
IN DAYTON, OHIO

DEAR HAPPY BRIDE: I'm sure no one shined brighter than you on your special day. You were beautiful, both from without and within. Even more important than the color scheme, your priorities were in order. I wish you and your husband many happy years together, surrounded by the friends who love you.

DEAR ABBY: I have never seen this problem in your column. My husband and I have been seeing "Dr. Smith" for more than 10 years. We like him, but we're considering going to another doctor who was recommended by a friend. Dr. Smith does only cursory examinations. He doesn't ask enough questions or really listen to our complaints. Our friend says her doctor is very patient and thorough.

This is a very small town, and we run into Dr. Smith at the country club from time to time. We don't want to offend him or be uncomfortable when we see him.

Your advice will be appreciated.

ALLAN AND KRYSTAL IN THE U.S.A.

DEAR ALLAN AND KRYSTAL: Change doctors if you feel you will receive better care. Your doctor may have such a full roster that he won't even miss the two of you. Please do not feel the need to apologize. Medicine is a business, and if Dr. Smith isn't customer-friendly, you are within your rights to seek care elsewhere. If you are asked why you felt the need to change doctors, tell him the truth. You'll be doing him a favor and helping to improve his practice for other patients.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Dear Abby

Christopher Reeve addresses Vt. graduates

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. (AP)—Actor Christopher Reeve told Middlebury College's graduating class Sunday that they should not lose sight of the difference they can make in the world, adding that "inaction is unacceptable."

The crowd grew hushed when Reeve, who sits in a motorized wheelchair, was pushed by an assistant to center stage.

"We can rationalize inaction by deciding that one voice or one vote doesn't matter, or we can make the choice that

inaction is unacceptable," said Reeve, who was paralyzed from the shoulders down after he fell from a horse in 1995.

"Whether or not you realize it right now, the education you have received here has prepared you to pursue your own ambitions without losing sight of the invaluable difference you can make in this world," Reeve told the class of 625 graduating seniors.

Reeve's wife, Dana, graduated from Middlebury College in 1984, and his brother, Jeffrey, is also an alumnus.

In an interview with The Associated Press after his speech, Reeve said he sees "a grassroots movement" toward more stem cell research, mentioning private research centers at Harvard University and in Cleveland.

Reeve said President Bush has a "moral obligation" to hear evidence supporting embryonic stem cell research. Bush's policy limits federal funding for such research to stem cell colonies created before August 2001.

"As president he has a responsibility to the greatest good for the greatest number of people," Reeve said.

Some scientists say stem cell research holds the most promise for helping Reeve recover.

In 2000, the actor best known for his role as "Superman" was able to move his index finger, and a specialized workout regimen has made his legs and arms stronger. He has also regained sensation in other parts of his body.



AP

Actor Paul Newman is shown in Chicago in this June 27, 2002, file photo.

Paul Newman opens camp for ill children

LAKE HUGHES, Calif. (AP)—Paul Newman, joined by movie-star buddy Bruce Willis and other celebrities, unveiled the sixth of his Hole in the Wall Gang camps for chronically ill children in this town on the edge of California's high desert.

"A lot of people have ideas and never do anything about them," Newman said at Saturday's dedication of Painted Turtle Camp. "A lot of people have dreams and never do anything about them. When you have ideas and dreams, you do something about it, and that's what we've done here. There's going to be a lot of comfort here, a lot of sweetness here."

The camp, with its whale-shaped, wheelchair-accessible swimming pool and gardens planted to minimize allergens, is designed for children too ill to attend a traditional summer camp.

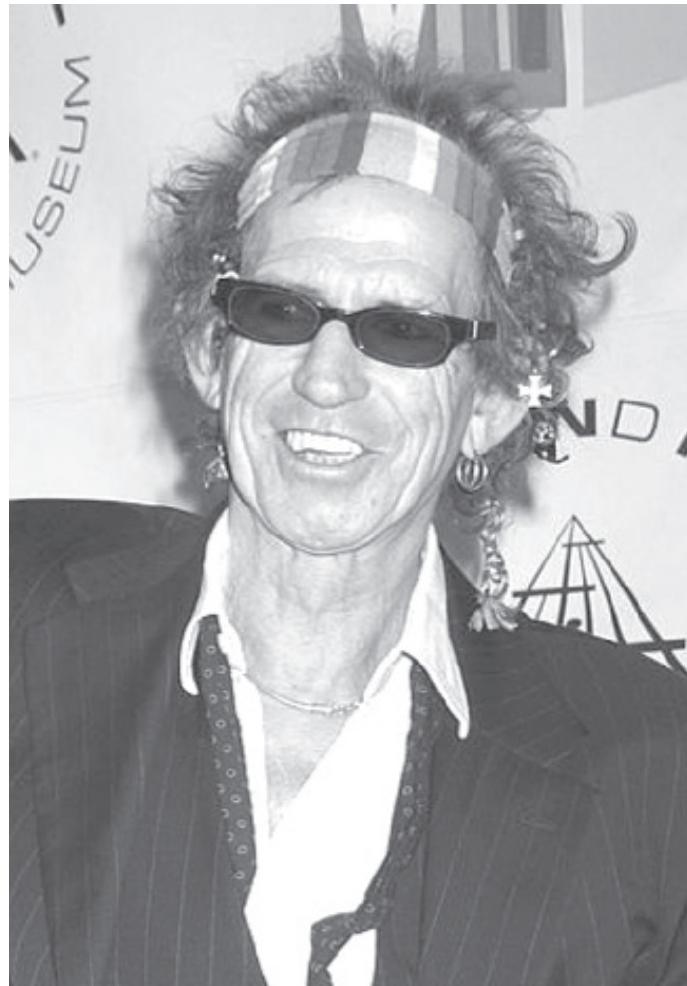
"It's a very special thing they're doing here," said Willis, posing for pictures with visitors. "Like Paul said, it's easy to have ideas. It takes a lot more to do something about it. These guys are doing something about it."

After the 173-acre camp's dedication, guests took a tour and were entertained by Sugar Ray, violinist Joshua Bell and dancer Savion Glover.

The facility, a former recreational vehicle campground, cost \$28 million to convert to Painted Turtle Camp.

The actor, whose Newman's Own food products company has given more than \$150 million to charities since 1982, helped get the camp off the ground. Newman and fellow actors Jack Nicholson, Julia Roberts and Matt Damon also raised \$2 million with a benefit stage performance, and the Los Angeles Lakers donated the gym's floor.

Richards plays small gig in Conn.



'P. Diddy' to tackle politics on MTV show

NEW YORK (AP)—Fresh from his Broadway debut, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs is heading back to MTV. Only this time, the hip-hop impresario plans to get political. In a new show tentatively called "Project Change," Combs hopes to grill President Bush and likely Democratic nominee John Kerry.

Combs told the New York

Post he'll scout the streets of Harlem, Brooklyn and Detroit for "real people" to ask the questions.

"The people who usually ask the candidates questions are screened, and I'm going to use real people off the streets to get their questions out there," Combs told the paper. "I'm going to make Kerry and Bush squirm."



P. Diddy

Combs, 34, said he hopes to encourage a record number of young people and minorities to vote.

Combs is currently starring in the Broadway revival of Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun." Although he received mixed reviews, initial ticket sales broke the Royale Theatre record.

He also recently announced a collaboration with Estee Lauder on a new line of fragrances under the rapper's Sean John name.

Trudeau apologizes for cartoon beheading

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Cartoonist Garry Trudeau apologized and several newspapers cautioned readers or refused to run Sunday's "Doonesbury" strip, which showed a man's head on a platter, two weeks after an American was beheaded in Iraq.

Although Sunday's strip was unrelated to the war and was drawn weeks before Nicholas Berg was beheaded, Trudeau said the strip was "unfortunately overtaken by events."

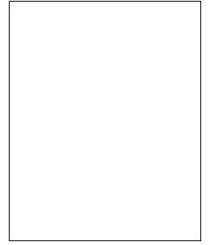
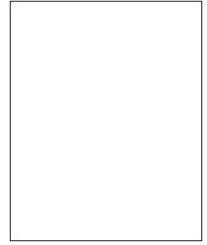
"To 'hand someone his head' is a common expression,

not normally associated with actual violence," Trudeau said in a statement on his Web site. "I regret the poor timing, and apologize to anyone who was offended by an image that is now clearly inappropriate."

In the strip, the character Joanie, angry about a friend being fired from a university coaching job, begins daydreaming. In the last frame, she's pictured carrying a platter with the head of the university president on it. He says, "What's this?" She responds, "A good start."

Most newspapers carried the cartoon but many—including The Miami Herald, the Richmond Times-Dispatch, The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Star Tribune of Minneapolis, the St. Paul Pioneer Press, The Boston Globe and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution—wrote accompanying editor's notes or columns explaining that the cartoon was distributed weeks in advance and publishing deadlines made it difficult to substitute another strip.

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